

NOVEMBER No.16 75p

BLITZ

INTERVIEWS PREVIEWS OPINION PEOPLE DESIGN MUSIC FILM FASHION VIDEO PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS



**RIK
MAYALL**
interview

+

A Matter of Style

**BOY GEORGE PAUL WELLER
STEVE STRANGE PETER YORK
SUE CLOWES**

**PAULA YATES MARILYN BRIAN ENO THE CURE
+ CHARLES KENNEDY BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH**

Peter Brook's *CARMEN*

a documentary and performance of Peter Brook's profound re-working of this popular opera.
The full opera will be shown on Channel 4

JOHN PIPER

a biography of one of Britain's most distinguished and versatile artists, at the time of his Tate Gallery retrospective

ALBERTO MORAVIA

one of Europe's leading novelists, the author of *The Woman of Rome* and *Two Women*, in an exclusive interview

Michael Crawford's *High Wire Act*

a portrait of Michael Crawford as he prepares for his perilous and unique theatrical performances

weather report

an appreciation of the internationally acclaimed American jazz/rock group

The Taviani Brothers

an interview with Italy's most intriguing new film directors

ALAN BLEASDALE

an interview with the man who has been called the dramatist of contemporary Britain and a look at his new play about Elvis Presley

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a master class on the origins and development of his songwriting technique, with extracts from his work

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filmed, and discussing his novels, in the world's best known Police Precinct

CLAUDIO ARRAU

one of the world's finest pianists talks about his life and music

SIMON RATTLE and The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

Britain's most exciting young conductor discusses and illustrates his and his orchestra's approach to great music

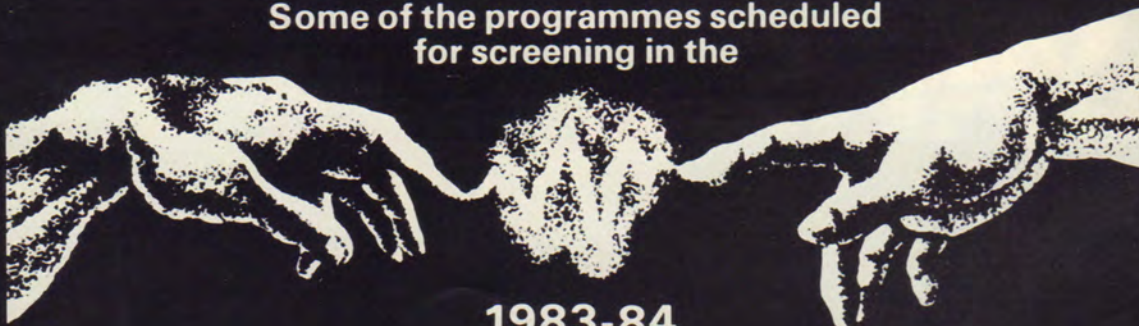
Jack Lemmon

one of Hollywood's most celebrated stars talks about acting, from his early days in live television through films such as *The Apartment* and *Some Like it Hot* to *Missing*

HOCKNEY THE PHOTOGRAPHER

about whom Hockney says "I may be one of those people who in the end will say 'the only good things I ever did were all those photos; all the other stuff is junk or pointless' "

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FRONT COVER
Rik Mayall. Photograph by
Steve Shipman.

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Static

■ **STICKY**, sunny afternoon in Cedar Street, New York, New York where John Sanborn has a loft. America's reigning Eccentric Video Artist lives within a stone's throw of Wall Street, in an area full of wrecked warehouses awaiting conversion into luxury riverfront apartments. But he doesn't look very luxurious himself. The man who dreams in video wears baggy khaki shorts and a faded T-shirt, and works from a bedroom which doubles as an in-house editing suite and preview theatre.

He does actually have a bed in there too, although there's a still-life of silver tubing and pink plastic shoes where the headboard should be. He used to be a sculptor before getting into video seven years ago. Now his tapes and equipment take up most of the space, and there's even two TVs, one colour and one black and white, both wired up for simultaneous viewing.

Video as a medium for self-expression now has about as many possibilities as the human brain can come up with, the only limits being those of imagination and budget. Every aspect of the image is infinitely variable – you can re-run your nightmares with a happy ending, or simply switch them off if they're getting out of hand...

The only law, as far as Sanborn is concerned, is avoiding the self-indulgent. "Video Art" is boring. I'd call myself more of a media artist. In general, with Video Art, there isn't enough of a relationship with the audience. You've got to realise that someone else is going to be watching this apart from yourself. And your audience need to feel they want to see it again and get something new out of it."

Sanborn and his partner Kit Fitzgerald prefer to look upon their production company as a video equivalent to the independent record labels – creating material that manages to be an art form and a commercial product at the same time. They've come up with their own highly recognisable style – "visual humming", combining the techniques of mainstream television with the energy and rhythm of "new music". That doesn't mean pop promos – at least not in the conventional manner. More like finding the right



Michael Coltery's astonishing architectural studies, entirely generated on a computer

■ **IN QUITE** a different league from John Sanborn's video art, and a step ahead of the album cover designed on computer for BLITZ by Al McDowell and John Warwicker (BLITZ 13), this architectural design by American Michael Coltery is created wholly on a computer. The design for the whole building exists within the computer's memory, and the computer can be told to present any aspect of the building or even to provide a guided tour. These, and a large selection of other computer images, are contained in Thames & Hudson's glossy book of Computer Images – State of the Art (£9.95, and cheap at the price).

□ JIM JOYCE



■ **REMEMBER** Eugene from Trevor Sorbie (Steve Strange's Creative Workforce – BLITZ no: 15)? Well, we thought you might like to see his latest creation for nightclubbers. The hair is shaved at the sides round the ears and the forehead, and the back is cut into a sharp bob. Then Eugene applied a special formula mousse. Don't be deceived though, this is a mirror image, but then again, we reckon it could be done with a beard...



BLITZ

BLITZ

visual interpretation of sounds. A recurrent theme is what Sanborn describes as "the heroics of the banal" – everyday life with an added ingredient. "No one ever shoots at me. I don't get into many car chases. I do the dishes a lot. The laundry has to get done – all the simple, boring things of everyday life."

He slots a cassette of *Static* (the guy meets gal flick with a difference) into the U-matic: a collection of stuttering rapid edits – set to a soundtrack of jumbled voices and electronic rhythm – boy and girl waiting separately on the subway platform. He's saying "We meet . . . we met . . ." and then wondering "If I . . . I was sure somehow . . ." Sequences are chopped up, movements skipped, frozen or repeated. Suddenly they're at a bar, drinking, dancing. What a relief! But now they're standing outside, face to face, and she's pleading, "Tell me I'm the only one!" It gets worse: she's slicing the bread, saying "Stop cutting me off", while he just repeats "I'm letting you off the hook, I'm letting you off the hook." Now they're fighting in a carpark as the soundtrack gets louder and louder, almost drowning their final "So long"s. And all of that in under two minutes.

The frame here is from *Act III*, a very different piece of work featuring cut-out paper triangles, squares and circles. It's actually a piece of music by Philip Glass, translated by Sanborn into a series of abstract images that swoop down over the New York skyline, before coming to rest in Glass' daughter's hand.

Sanborn's latest project is the astonishing video opera *Perfect Lives (Private Parts)*, set to music by avant-garde composer Robert Ashley: a collection of highly ambitious images of surreal figures and everyday objects in abstract surroundings. Channel Four are due to screen the tape in seven half-hourly parts later this year. Sanborn sees it as the best expression yet of his concept of visual humming. "It works to the extent that the entire process becomes stuck in your mind, and, I hope, you really do need to see it again."

□ ALICE HILLER



■ THIS TABLE is no ordinary table. First of all, as a one-off, it could cost in the region of £1200-£1400. Second of all, it was designed and conceived by Andrew Martin, Art Director of the NME. The table is the first of a series of post-modernist designs inspired by his recent trip to Italy, and was constructed and finished by Tony Wills and Gregory Holme of the Tag Design Partnership. BLITZ wondered if this was going to be a forthcoming distraction from lay-out at the NME – "No" says Andrew, "I've always been interested in graphics. It's difficult to make too many graphic changes in print because of the powers from above; but I'd like to introduce more colour and better paper for the NME – as it is we ought to be giving away free sachets of soap to every reader to wipe off the newsprint!"

Back to the tables, Martin and the Tag Partnership are hoping to make a cheaper series next year, retailing for around £600, and a series of clocks for under £20. Meanwhile for all post-modernist fans, the table is on view at Dan Klein, Motcomb Street, London SW1, unless some wealthy rock star has just snapped it up.

□ TOM ELIOT



Photograph and styling by Peter Brown; Make-up by Mark Easton at Premier; Hair by Guido at Clifford Stafford; Modelled by Angus Ross and Jacqueline Butler at Laraine Ashton. Clothes by Willy Brown: 1916 Dress – £49; shirt/jacket – £44; striped cap by Demob – £8.





James Stewart in *Rear Window* (see Film Reviews), based on a story by Cornell Woolrich in one of the first Black Box Thrillers

Black Boxes

■ FOR A company who have been in business for less than seven months, Zomba Books seem to be in the enviable position of having created a highly successful publishing trend.

Set up in May this year by the former founder and MD of Virgin Books, Maxim Jakubowski, they published earlier this year under the banner *Black Box Thrillers* three superb compendiums of novels by three classic American writers of the '30s and '40s: Cornell Woolrich, Jim Thompson and David Goodis. The idea is so simple, and so obviously commercial, that it's astonishing that none of the established publishers thought of it. Now it would seem that all the other companies are keen to leap on the bandwagon. This autumn sees the publication of a variety of

similar works: Ballantine are reprinting another Woolrich classic, *Night has a Thousand Eyes*, and Picador have a collection of the complete works of Nathaneal West, whose four novels, of which *The Day of the Locust* is probably the best-known, aren't exactly thrillers in the normal sense but share the same hardbitten style as Zomba's rediscoveries. Also on Picador is the first volume of *The Chandler Collection*, containing *The Big Sleep*, *The Little Sister* and *The Lady in the Lake*.

None of these are likely to be as interesting as the second crop of *Black Box Thrillers*, a selection this time of works by Frederic Brown, described disturbingly by Mickey Spillane as "my favourite writer of all time", and Horace McCoy, whose

They Shoot Horses, Don't They? is probably one of the best undiscovered classics of the period. Also published is a collection of novels by contemporary writer Marc Behm.

For the third set of thrillers, due in April 1984, Jakubowski plans to branch out a little with works by Anthony Boucher – a detective writer he describes as "an American GK Chesterton" – and contemporary novelist Jerome Scharym who, though never published in this country, is a massive cult success in France where he was recently described as a cross between Marcel Proust and Woody Allen.

□ JIM JOYCE

New Print

■ AUTUMN is the time at which hysteria descends upon the publishing houses of London as everyone rushes to compete either for The Booker Prize or the Christmas Gift market. A strong contender for the best-seller lists (indeed actually described by the publishers as "this year's bestseller") is Ann Barr and Peter York's *The Official Sloane Ranger Diary* (Ebury Press £4.95), and it will, no doubt, do well on the strength of its predecessor *The Official Sloane Ranger Handbook*. A record of how Henry and Caroline spend the year, the new opus will be adored by hundreds of Henrys and Carolines all over Britain. The rest of us may be left wondering whether the joke isn't running a bit thin, and coming to the conclusion that this is no longer an affectionate and humorous swipe at the Sloane Set, but more a genuine and only a little tongue-in-cheeked guide to *How To Be Successful Without Actually Doing Anything*. Never one to hedge his bets, Peter York also has a reprint of *Style Wars* on the market, a rather more worthwhile collection of essays on fads and fashions, originally published a couple of years ago.

On the subject of fashion, Zomba Books have *The Fashion Year* (£6.95) a study of yes, you guessed it, the fashion of the past year. Don't expect anything too unusual – this is strictly mainstream, revolving mainly around the collections by the established designers, with little attention given to the up-and-comings. But then what can you expect from a book assembled by the fashion editors of, amongst others, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The London Evening*





Clothes by Issey Miyake, one of the designers profiled in *The Fashion Year*

Standard?

On the music front there is Carey Schofield's unilluminating *Jagger* (Methuen £7.95), and Fred Dellar's *Rock and Pop Crosswords* (Zomba £2.50), which is entertaining but easily disposed of. Hutchinson's have *Future Pop: Music For the Eighties* (£7.95), a collection of pretty but unremarkable photographs of everyone from Culture Club to Rick James accompanied by pretty but unremarkable quotes from same.

A final mention for *The Ultimate Angels* (Hutchinson £12.95), a collection of astonishing photographs of transsexuals in Paris' Bois de Boulogne, and which elicited numerous exclamations of surprise and disbelief in the BLITZ offices. Definitely not a book to give to your grandmother, but fascinating all the same.

□ TOM ELIOT

Ray Lowry



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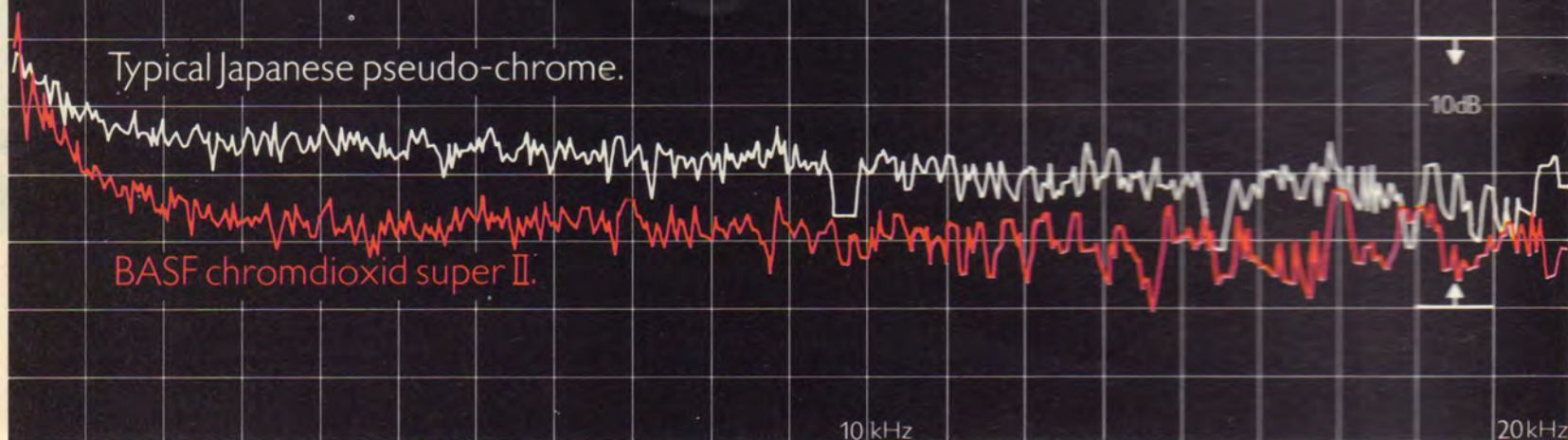
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Under Exposed



■ **BEST KNOWN** for his cover to Patti Smith's *Horses* album, and his pictures of bodybuilder Lisa Lyon, New Yorker Robert Mapplethorpe has been exhibiting his photos around Europe and America for some seven years, and at last London's ICA plays host from 4th November to his first major retrospective in this country.

He sends ahead of him a reputation as something of a stylish shocker – a major part of the exhibition is devoted to Mapplethorpe's quite staggering studies of the black American cock – but his studies of both male and female physique are all concerned, oddly moving portraits, singularly free from sleaze. The photos of hisocialites Hockney, Snowdon and Warhol are less interesting because of their orthodoxy, but his far-from-pop pics of Deborah Harry, Iggy, Marianne Faithfull and William Burroughs are much less conventional.

Most surprising are Mapplethorpe's flowers. Spiky palms, wilting tulips and playing lilies, they seem the most natural exhibits of all, if only because they look so perfect. Like all the best portraits on show, they are transformed by a photographer with an eye not just for the moment, but for the sensation of flesh touched by hard hands.

You can feel the petals and skin in this show, and you can't get nearer to the heart of either photographer or subject than that.

□ SIMON GARFIELD

Peace Year



■ **AS PART** of their campaign for Peace Year, the GLC have assembled a set of posters by photomontage artist Peter Kennard, all revolving around the subject of nuclear holocaust. The pack is available free to peace groups, community organisations, libraries, and what the GLC describe as "others concerned with the message of peace". Details are available from The Peace Year Office, Department for Recreation and the Arts, County Hall, London SE1 (01-633 5557).

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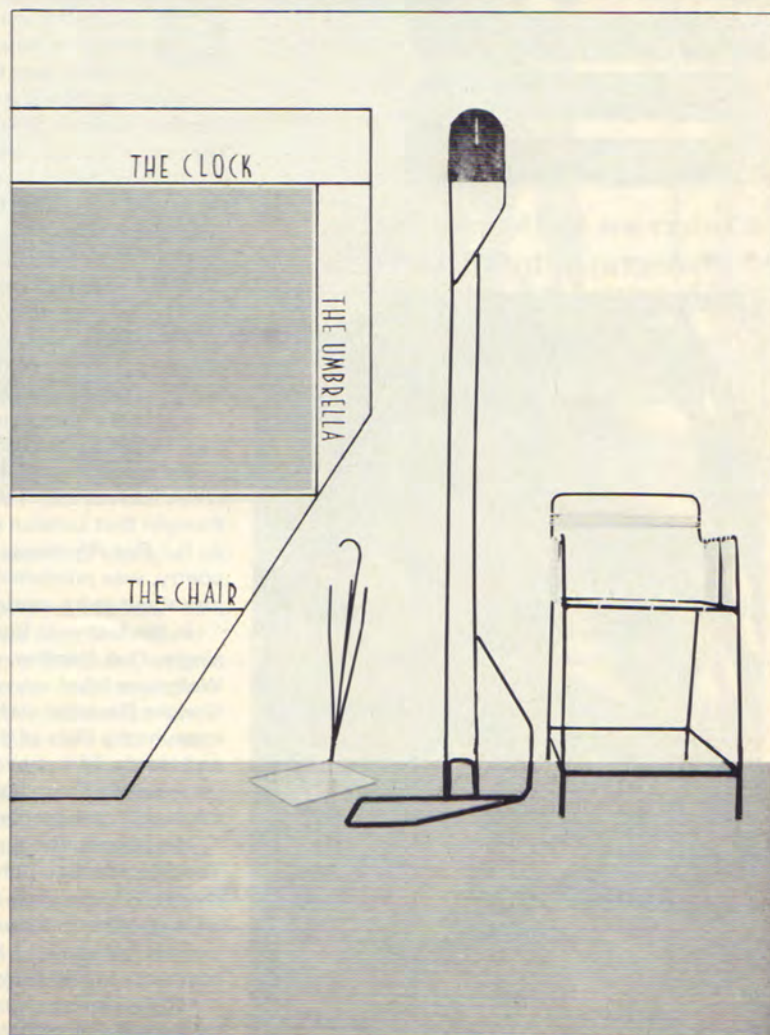
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DUB RANTING

◆ Interview by Deanne Pearson
◆ Photographs by Miriam Reik



“I LOVE ALL kinds of media. I just want to exploit it. Put over my views. I think that if I don't get up and represent myself someone else will.”

Well, here you are, Benjamin Zephaniah, just you, me and a tape recorder.

Benjamin has been labelled a lot of things by the media – a political poet, a punk Rastafarian, a spokesman for the oppressed black community. Me, I'm not saying too much. You take him as you find him.

I found him in a small terraced house in Stratford, East London, via a Nicaraguan Benefit Show on Channel 4 a couple of months ago. Amongst a lot of talent, faces and names, he stood out as an individual who had something to say, was forceful and aggressive in manner, yet subtle in his message – his sketches a mixture of politics and humour, equally balanced. Dub ranting, he calls it, in preference to poetry.

Onstage he's alive with emotion and conviction, using every inch of the stage to pace up and down and skanking to the rhythm of the words, locks flying, arms flailing. At home, with his photographs of Bob Marley, Marcus Garvey and his mum on the walls, and two cats Kaya and Kizzie, he's relatively mild-mannered – but still eager to talk.

There's a lot to say, in just a few hours. Last night he was in Brighton performing, tonight he's onstage in Stratford and tomorrow morning he's talking to kids in school in Glasgow. But let's start at the beginning . . .

BENJAMIN was born in Jamaica but moved to Handsworth, Birmingham, when he was four. School was not a great success – more a succession of detention centres, borstals, approved schools and jail from the age of eleven onwards.

All the time he was making up rhymes in his head. “I'd be talking to friends and they'd say something, and I'd finish it off in my head, in rhyme,” he remembers. “Then at school, when I hated all the teachers and stuff, I'd make up rhymes about them.”

His ‘poetry’ was first aired when he was about 16, via the sound systems in and around Birmingham, his audience at that time all black. “I was really known in Handsworth, but nowhere else,” he remembers.

He moved to London about four years ago, when he was 23. “I wanted to write a book and thought that London was the place to come and do it.” *Pen Rhythms*, a book of Benjamin's poetry, was published about a year ago, and is just about to be reprinted.

In the last year Benjamin has also had out a single, *Dub Ranting*, on the independent Radical Wallpaper label, and an album, *Rasta*, on Upright Records – who also have on their rostrum the likes of the Dead Kennedys, Laurel and Hardy, Milkshakes and Bad Brains (a rasta punk band). There have also been several television appearances, mostly Channel 4.

His appeal, like poets Seething Wells, Attila The Stockbroker, John Cooper Clark and Linton Kwesi Johnson, has much to do with his street-wise credibility, his use of everyday language and his fusion of the horrific and the humorous moments in life. He has the ability to make most people, black and white, feel sympathetic, angry and uncomfortable by turn. With his almost comical Brummie West Indian accent he

is also one of the few Rastafarians who can actually be understood by the majority of people.

“I didn't have an education as such,” Benjamin broods thoughtfully. “I certainly didn't have a university education like Linton Kwesi Johnson. And sometimes I wish I had. It would help me now if I could write faster – things like that – I would have written a book and lots more things, you know? But in a way I got an education that's just as valid, on the streets. I had to learn fast about life, about practical things.”

“One reviewer called my poems nursery rhymes, but I don't mind. I write the way I speak, and I've never claimed to be a poet anyway.”

He is generally tagged a political poet by the media, and he does not deny politics play an important part, both in his rhymes and his life, but intimates that it is naive of people to think that his words and performance go no further.

“What I write about is basic human rights. I could be talking about an Indian woman coming through the airport, and you have people looking in her vagina for something. Now to fight that you have to talk to politicians, because they organise it, you know, but that's not politics. It's just basic human rights. It shouldn't happen. It depends what you take politics to mean. If politics means just organising to fight, then I suppose I just use it.”

He throws back his locks and smiles – that disarming gap-toothed smile that makes you laugh before he's said anything remotely funny.

“Humour helps me to communicate with everybody,” he asserts. “Most poets are kinda boring – serious. I'm naturally quite funny. I found at the first few gigs I did people were laughing at me – because I was dropping my bit of paper with my list of poems or whatever – then after a while they were laughing with me, because there's a humorous side to even my most serious poems.”

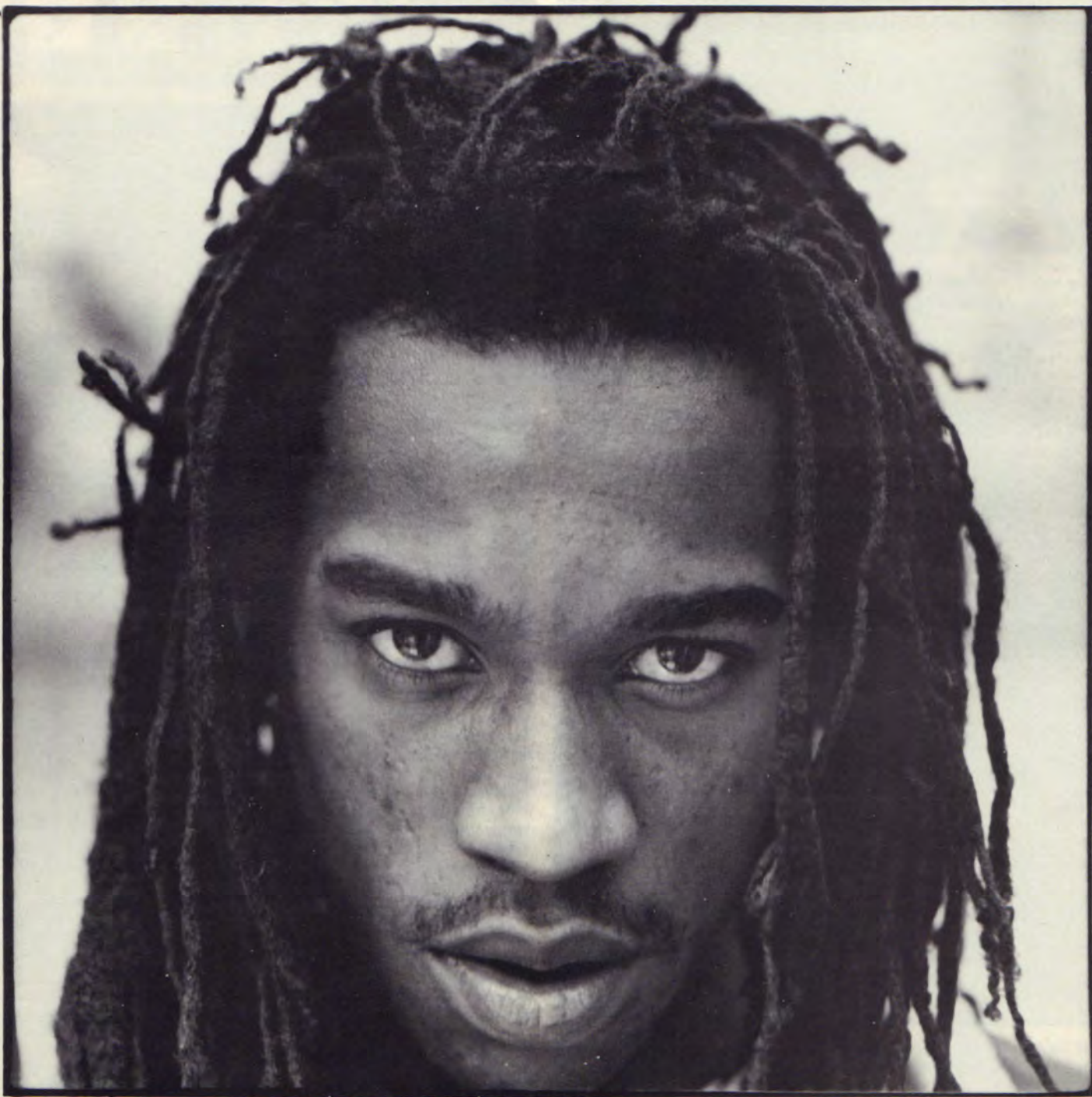
DURING his live performances the audience are obviously very much part and parcel of his act, listening intently and laughing throughout, maybe at Benjamin, at the deliberate irony in his lines, or themselves and their own discomfort. *Dis Policeman Keeps On Kicking Me To Death* is an obvious example. Dedicated to Lord Scarman, it tells the story of a black man being brutally kicked by a policeman, and then by another, this time a black policeman. There's no justice . . .

It's good to laugh, even at the most serious issues, Benjamin believes, and proffers the following story by way of explanation.

“There's a story from South Africa, some black children got killed, there was a demonstration and the police were called in. But the people started rejoicing, partying, saying you're not gonna see us crying all the time. In other words, in the face of the oppressor if you can smile sometimes it hurts more than getting up and fighting.”

“He who fights and walks away lives to fight another day” – if we've all got our heads down most of the time they're going to know they're winning.”

Poems such as *Soul Boys In Corduroys*, which Benjamin, dressed in corduroys himself, takes a delight in enacting onstage, and *Superstar On Guitar*, in which Benjamin pokes wicked fun at Eddy Grant, are more obvious



satire.

The latter poem, somewhat ironically, brings us onto Benjamin's own ventures into the recording world. Not only does he write and recite the words on his single and album, but he also plays bass. To my mind the recordings are not nearly so successful as his live performances. Set to backing music his words somehow lose the full brunt of their power and emotion.

Take a poem like *13 Dead*, about the children who died under suspicious circumstances in the New Cross fire last year. Every time Benjamin recites it live, he says, he is filled with all the fury and feeling he felt when he first wrote it. On record the listener is lulled into a false sense of passivity.

"Recording is just another thing I do," Benjamin shrugs. "I've no intention of leaving writing for music." He is, however, planning to

record another single and album, for Upright, shortly.

"It's another avenue of communication," he explains. "People write to me who have heard the album but never been to a live show, people who come to the live shows don't always know I've got a album out. People write to me after seeing me on TV. By doing bits here and there I reach different people."

He doesn't know how well his records sell: "I'm not really into figures, but they looked alright when I looked at them." That disarming smile again.

For the time being he's concentrating on another aspect of communication, visiting schools and talking to children about racism and Rastafarianism. "I like doing that, it's more like work and less like showbusiness," he says. "Y'know, I never had anyone like me come and talk to me when I was at school. Maybe if I had

I would have got on better. I've been visiting lots of community centres too, and mental institutions, places like that. There's nothing like that, y'know, it's a really good experience."

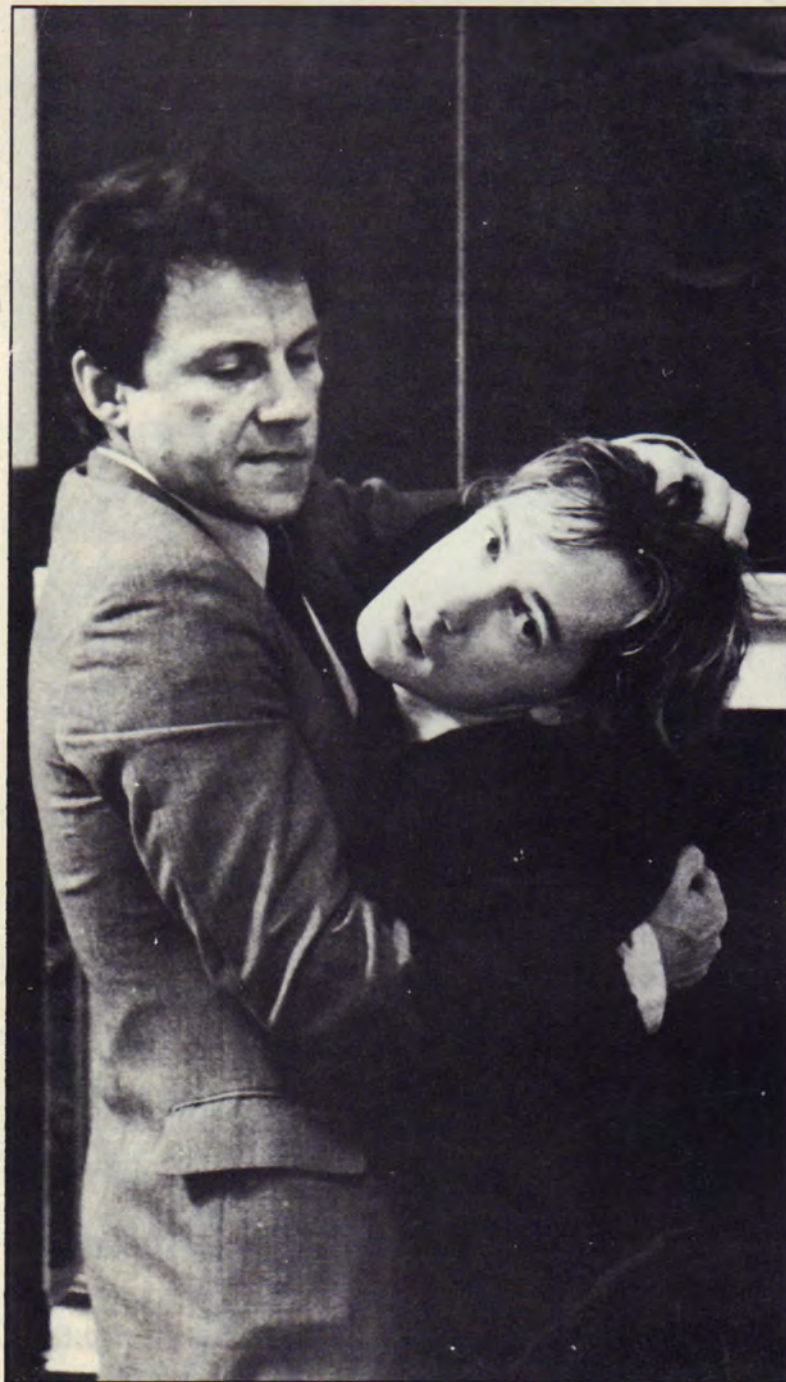
Besides this he is very involved in Stratford's food co-operative (which he co-founded), housing, book and advice co-operatives, and in local issues such as the 'who killed Colin Roach' campaign.

"Basically I don't have too many plans for the future. I just keep on working, you know? I'm not the kind of artist that needs to prove anything. I always say I haven't got fans, I've got sympathisers."

So don't talk to Benjamin Zephaniah about poetry.

Don't talk to Benjamin Zephaniah about politics.

Not in so many words that is . . .



ORDER OF DEATH

Directed by Roberto Faenza. John Lydon, Harvey Keitel.

■ IF *SMITHEREENS* was a Hell of a movie, then this just had to be a Rotten one. John Lydon outshines allcomers in *Order of Death*, his cinematic debut, and still no one's any the wiser as to whether he can act. Billed as 'a pale asexual freak', it comes as no surprise to learn that he very much plays himself.

Claiming to be an English-educated New York cop killer, Leo Smith disrupts the smug, ordered society of corrupt narcotics chief Fred O'Connor (Harvey Keitel) — a cosy afternoon retreat bought with the profits from illegal drug-trafficking, and a respite from the routine chaos of his police work. Smith parades a family-size guilt complex stemming from both a wealthy upbringing and an assumed responsibility for the many recent cop murders and explains that he's been tracking O'Connor for six months to expose his dual lifestyle and, after a sufficiently cool series of twists, to transfer some of his guilt.

The verbal volleys and ordered transformation of their relationship forms the core of the film; the measured, quick-witted switch from the freak tied naked in the bath snarling at the police chief with the gun, to the freak with the gun grinning at the chief shaking in terror on the ledge of a gaping top-floor window. This is certainly not a love song.

Taken from the novel by Hugh Fleetwood, *Order of Death* is a jumpy, compelling and highly entertaining tale. Consistently overplaying his hand, Lydon is always amusing — not least because he's a bona fide graduate of the So Bad It's Good Academy of acting. Or put it another way, if he's acting then he's a natural.

"Look at the film industry all over the world," said Lydon three years ago, "it's collapsing, right? What it needs is whole new ideas and a totally different approach... The possibilities are endless." This is one of those possibilities — anti acting. Is this just the first of a string of great movie performances? Is there a Malcolm McLaren in the filmhouse?



Michael Douglas in a sticky situation from *The Star Chamber*

THE STAR CHAMBER

Directed by Peter Hyams. Michael Douglas, Hal Holbrook, Yaphet Kotto, Sharon Gless.

■ THERE aren't too many things you can do when you're a young, idealistic judge and have to set free someone you know to be a guilty, violent criminal; when you have to let someone out on the streets to commit further — often sexual — crimes; when detectives pick up a man for multiple muggings and use the gun he's dumped in a garbage can as prime evidence, but you have to let the mugger go because they didn't have a warrant to search through the garbage in the first place.

There comes a time when you've let go enough plainly guilty criminals as a result of merely outdated, pedantic legal loopholes when you begin to look for a new solution. One such is offered by the *Star Chamber*, a clandestine group of Superior Court judges who decide that the legal loophole excuse is not good enough. By subverting legal precedent they take the law even more firmly into their own

hands — they decide to knock off the criminals themselves.

Peter Hyams' *The Star Chamber* belongs to that Long Good Friday school of intelligent, necessarily violent thrillers. Michael Douglas plays the young judge faced with the moral dilemmas that lead him to the vacant seat in the imaginary Californian vigilante court. The film deals essentially with his personal turmoil; what does he tell his wife when she sees on TV that the man her husband set free was today sentenced — by another judge — to life imprisonment having just killed another young boy? More important, what does he tell himself?

Hence the judge joins the *Star Chamber* to re-try criminals behind closed doors. All are found guilty and a hitman is swiftly hired for their demise. But the idea that you can never be sure enough pervades to the end and it turns *The Star Chamber* into a chilling, thoughtfully realistic and highly recommended film that sets the Charles Bronson breed of mindless vigilante movies firmly in the shade.

□ SIMON GARFIELD



Peter Strauss testdrives the new Mini Metro in *Spacehunter*

□ SIMON GARFIELD



"Sit! Sit! For God's sake, sit!" Dee Wallace has trouble house-breaking a rabid St. Bernard

CUJO

Directed by Lewis Teague. Dee Wallace, Daniel Hugh Kelly, Danny Pintauro.

■ **FORGET** the promotional hype of this being the film about everyone's closet fears and enjoy *Cujo* for what it is: a terror film of frightening realism and cool simplicity.

Taken from the book by Stephen King — an author in the unusual position of having had almost every single book made into a film — the film focusses on a feuding married couple (the wife is Dee Wallace, still fresh from motherhood in *ET*), both concerned by the imagined nightmarish fears of their

six year-old son. Disappointingly, he turns out to be yet another Hollywood tearjerker brat with blond hair and blue eyes, and who's quite sweet enough to eat (and then regurgitate later).

His fear is a monster in his toy cupboard. The real danger is a bit worse: a snarling rabid St. Bernard who never looks as though he'll be happy with just a plate of Winalot.

A good half-hour of rabid dog makes a stunning climax to a film that you hoped from the outset would not turn into just another child-custody yarn. It succeeds because for an hour there's occasionally the terrifying suggestion that it might.

□ SIMON GARFIELD

SPACEHUNTER

Directed by Lamont Johnson. Peter Strauss, Molly Ringwald, Andrea Marcovicci.

■ **IF** 3-D glasses weren't so uncomfortable and didn't give me a raging headache every time I tried to focus through them, I could forgive the current trend for thrusting death and destruction (*Halloween III*, *Friday the 13th*, *Part III* and, to come, *Jaws III*) smack in our faces. As it is, a little suffering can soon be forgiven in the name of entertainment and it makes a change to see a space adventure up there on the screen, chucking lasers, spaceships and mutants at you instead of the old knife-throwing act.

Spacehunter is really *Mad Max* in Space borrowing from at least half a dozen other movies: Peter Strauss is the poor man's Harrison Ford, the "wily" pilot of a space salvage craft, Molly Ringwald is a young, shrill Shirley MacLaine while the swamp dwelling Amazonian Barracuda Women are refugees from *Octopussy*. The hardware — all lumbering, rusty, monstrous metal — is stolen straight from *Max*'s garage and if you wondered what happened to the characters from *Quest For Fire* they're all here too.

The story is straightforward enough: Strauss responds to a galactic distress signal from a wrecked craft with three girls on board who have become marooned on the plague-infested planet Terra Eleven and prisoners of the horrible Overdog, half plague-infested man, half machine. Strauss and his trusty female sidekick travel to the Forbidden Zone to rescue them, encountering on the way all manner of mutant horrors.

Instead of shocking with endless effects to justify the 3-D tag, *Spacehunter* concentrates more on the action and story so that when a mutant falls into your lap, it's a surprise rather than an expected run-of-the-mill thrill. The script is decidedly dodgy — "we have blood loss here", offers one character — but the bands of marauding nasties and piles of junkyard space scraps are enough to keep the film busy and entertaining.

□ JUDY LIPSEY

REAR WINDOW

Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. James Stewart, Grace Kelly, Raymond Burr.

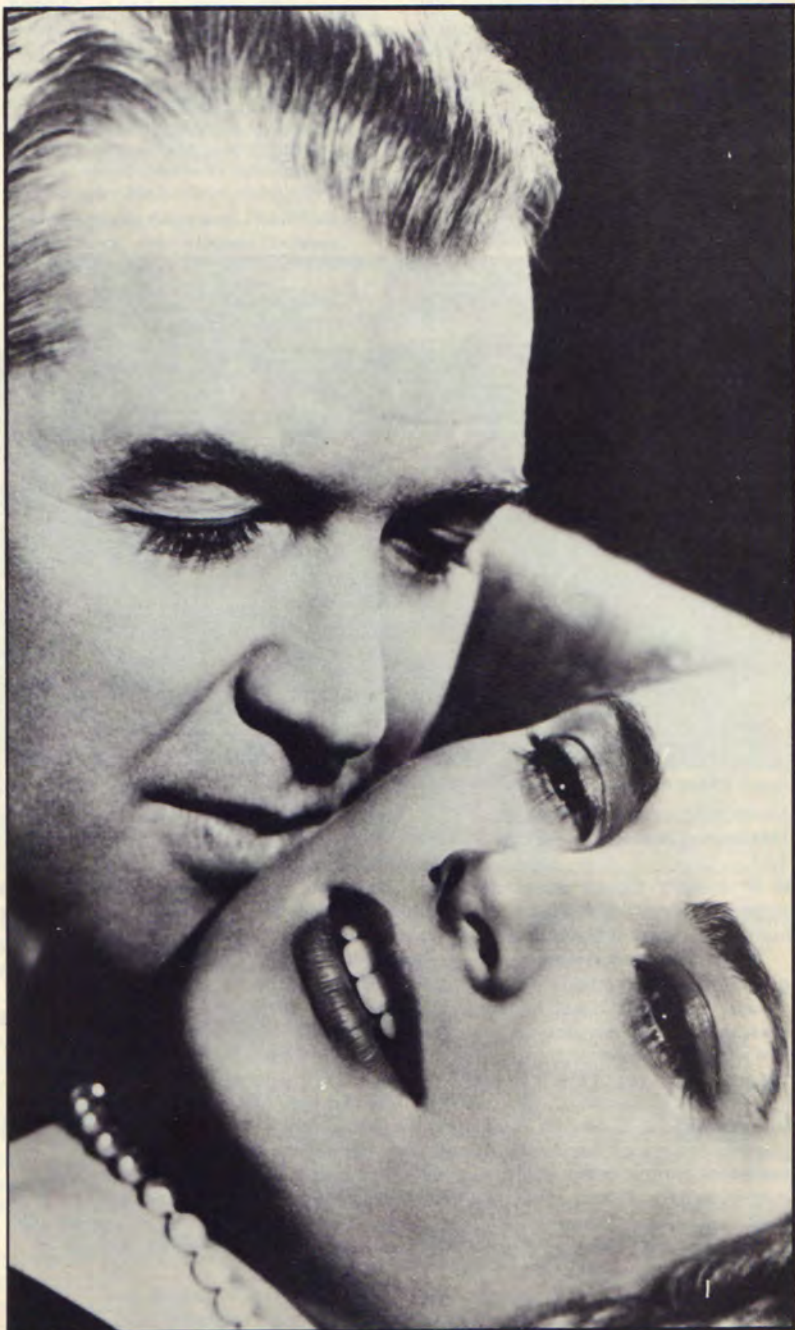
■ **IN** 1975, Alfred Hitchcock withdrew five of his more interesting releases from theatrical and TV release. No explanation was given other than 'personal reasons', and for the last eight years the five movies — *Rear Window*, *Rope*, *Vertigo*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and *The Trouble With Harry* — have been unavailable for viewing anywhere. UIP have now secured the rights to all five and are releasing them one after another for screening in London, though there is at present only a slim chance of any wider release.

The first of the batch, *Rear Window*, is based on a short story by one of the masters of American pulp thrillers, Cornell Woolrich, which is, coincidentally, included in the compendium of Woolrich's stories recently published by Zomba Books. It's a courageous bit of film-making, dispensing with the epic allure of elaborate sets and exotic locations, and instead centring wholly on a single apartment and placing its trust in the more potent subject of voyeurism and the acting talents of the two stars.

The result is the kind of chemistry my mother used to tell me about, combining the dim recalcitrance of Stewart's house-bound photojournalist with a broken leg, and the mesmerising sexuality of Kelly's self-possessed socialite. Stewart seems to prefer weightlifters or mercenaries, but Kelly will not take the rebuke lying down — though she does try it — and finally proves herself by revealing a rather more adventurous side to her character and saving Stewart's life.

As a temporary invalid, photographer Jeff spends his days at his rear window watching the comings and goings in the apartment block opposite. He gradually becomes convinced that he's witnessed a murder, but has considerable difficulty persuading anyone to believe it. If you can honestly claim that you have no curiosity about the private lives of others, then I concede that the appeal of *Rear Window* may be a little restricted, since as a murder mystery it is distracting but unremarkable. But the dialogue is like a continuous exchange of middle-range ammunition, and the prurient undertone that trickles through the film had, on me at least, a considerably troubling effect.

□ MARK BRENNAN



James Stewart checks Grace Kelly's ring of confidence



"Twice I regretted making this film" says Pele in *Young Giants*

YOUNG GIANTS

Directed by Terrell Tannen. John Huston, Pele, Peter Fox.

■ I SAT THERE with a frown of bewildered incredulity on my face. *Young Giants* seeks to shine as a testament to those who still believe in miracles, but succeeds only in underlining the fact that money makes the world go round. The end result is like one of those dreadful Country and Western songs about cripples, cancer and catastrophe.

John Huston plays an ageing priest fighting off not only the big C but also the city planning department which intends to knock down his decrepit orphanage and kick its football-crazy occupants out into the street. After only ten minutes of the film this did seem the most sensible

course to take, but Father Cadenas does not agree. Instead he decides to raise the money necessary to save the building by persuading Pele (whom, it just so happens, Cadenas coached many years ago) to hold a football clinic in aid of the home.

The film's optimism is commendable, but the presentation is likely to exasperate anyone not in the habit of wearing, not just their heart, but half their entrails on their sleeve. John Huston spends most of the film dying, and after the first half hour merely rattles occasionally. Pele cries convincingly, but, conspicuously, hardly kicks a ball. Even if his financial intervention is only a minor miracle, the detail of *Young Giants* is implausible and vulgar.

□ MARK BRENNAN



Chevy Chase experiences a slight failure to communicate

NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VACATION

Directed by Harold Ramis. Chevy Chase, Beverley d'Angelo.

■ IF CHEVY Chase were to run for President, at least America would have somebody intentionally funny to vote for – as it is he's doomed to play to lesser audiences in half-witted comedies that leave his comic talent straining at the leash.

National Lampoon was once a very funny, highly irreverent and often sick magazine that extended its humour to records and topped it all with the film *Animal House*; but it's all gone downhill since then. *National Lampoon's Vacation* was originally a short story by one John Hughes published in the magazine some five years ago and even though it's supposed to be a fresh satire (yet another) on the American way of life, it should have stayed on the page.

Claud W. Griswold (Chase) takes his wife and their two children on a vacation from Chicago to California by car with the sole purpose of visiting Whalley World, a giant funfair (for all the family of course) that doubtless exists under a less impudent name. Predictably the journey is a catalogue of disasters – an ageing aunt picked up along the way mysteriously dies in the back of the car and is unceremoniously dumped outside her nephew's back door, and an encounter with a bunch of jet black guys with hip hi-fi's prompts Griswold Junior to "wonder if these guys know the Commodores".

The upshot of all this is that the Griswold family outing is gauche and embarrassing and just faintly amusing instead of being a rollicking joke. Pity really.

□ JUDY LIPSEY

VIDEO: CURRENT RELEASES

FAST FORWARD

**** Excellent
*** Good

** If there's nothing better
* Don't waste your money

** Just out on PolyGram video is a set of three cassettes explaining exactly how to beat all the major video games in both arcade and home computer formats, including *Space Invaders*, *Pac-Man* and *Frogger*. Apparently the video game craze is not what it used to be judging by all those unattended pub machines. PolyGram's aim is supposedly to inspire new interest in video games. It seems more likely that these how-to-do-it tapes will only speed up the decline ** Tony Wilson's Factory Records have a large number of music videos on the market. But because of Factory's puzzling non-promotion policy no one knows about them. Product includes tapes of Joy Division and New Order and two compilations of assorted Factory bands with some tracks recorded live at The Hacienda. A tape of A Certain Ratio is due before Xmas ** The BBC has a series of tapes lined up in their Video Tastes range. Releases include *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*, *Ripping Yarns*, *Grange Hill* and a *Top of the Pops* compilation. There are no plans to release *The Young Ones* (see Rik Mayall interview). Perhaps this is what the BBC might consider to be *Nasty not Tasty* ** Soon to come on MGM/UA video: *The Year of Living Dangerously* ** As an attempt to beat the pirates at their own game CIC are planning to shorten the time between cinematic and video release. New titles include *48 Hours* with Nick Nolte and Eddie Murphy, and *The Lords of Discipline*, only released in the cinemas two months ago ** Other new releases include: *Blade Runner*, *Clint Eastwood's Firefox* (Warner); *The Alexei Sayle Pirate Video – Authorised Bleedin' Version* (Videospace); *Heat and Dust* (3M); *Frances*, *Local Hero* (EMI).

□ SIMON TESLER



DINER (MGM/UA) ****

Dir. Barry Levinson. Steve Guttenberg, Daniel Stern, Mickey Rourke (1982)

A superb, intelligent and very funny comedy about five Baltimore college chums in the late '50s who congregate in the local diner while trying to decide what to do in life now that they've left school. Very much in the same vein as

American Graffiti but far more poignant and witty, and without *American Graffiti's* cloying and distracting sense of nostalgia. Some of the more elaborate jokes are borrowed – the famous penis-in-the-popcorn set-piece comes from a French film called *La Boum* – but there is so much warmth and character in *Diner* that it hardly matters. Highly recommended.

DEAD PIGEON ON BEETHOVEN STREET (Thorn-EMI) *½

Dir. Sam Fuller. Glenn Corbett, Christa Lang, Stephane Audran (1979).

Sam Fuller is the creator of the so-called "cinema fist" school of film-making, the kind of thing that makes *Dirty Harry* look like *Alice in Wonderland*, and where a man is either a he-man or a pansy, and a woman is a whore, either with or without a heart of gold. The word subtle doesn't even exist. Nevertheless, the French and the Germans have taken him to their hearts and regard him as cult, whereas anyone else might see his work as trash. *Dead*

Pigeon is a farcically sleazy story about an American private eye who gets mixed up with a group of political blackmailers in Hamburg. Some people will find the whole thing tedious and offensive, others might derive a bizarre fascination with this comic strip world that is probably the nearest anyone has ever come to putting *True Detective Stories* on film. The highly respected French actress Stephane Audran makes a bewildering cameo appearance as a lesbian psychiatrist called Dr. Bogdanovitch, presumably named after the American film-critic turned director Peter Bogdanovich whose movies are just about everything that Fuller's are not.

THE MISSIONARY (Thorn-EMI) *½
Dir. Richard Loncraine. Michael Palin, Maggie Smith, Trevor Howard (1983)
THE COMPLETE RUTLES (Palace) **½
Dir. Eric Idle & Gary Weis. Eric Idle, Neil Innes, Mick Jagger (1979)



Two films from two part-time Pythons. It's interesting to note that the Pythons are very rarely as funny, as original or as successful in their individual projects as they are collectively, the only possible exception being John Cleese's *Fawlty Towers* series. That, no doubt, is the reason behind their periodic regrouping for the occasional feature film. But it comes as something of a shock to notice that on their own each one of them is capable only of a surprisingly narrow comic imagination. Added to that is the fact that their particular brand of humour is so over-familiar – imitated and recited a thousand times by ardent admirers – that it seems now only old-fashioned and contrived. Michael Palin's Edwardian comedy, *The Missionary* is beautifully presented, but desperately mannered, a *Ripping Yarn* painfully extended to feature length with little other than pretty pictures and the occasional chuckle to offer to a generation now accustomed to *Not the Nine O'Clock News* and *The Comic Strip*. Eric Idle's *Rutles*, born out of his disappointing *Rutland Weekend TV* show, is more successful and boasts mock appearances by Mick and Bianca Jagger and the *Saturday Night Live* team in its affectionate pastiche of The Beatles, but too often resorts to the familiar Python piss-take of the over-enthusiastic documentary narrator. Rather more exciting is the genuine half-hour documentary added on the end of the tape of the making of *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence*.

SOPHIE'S CHOICE (Precision) ***
Dir. Alan J. Pakula. Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline, Peter MacNichol (1983)



In a lot of ways *Sophie's Choice* tends to look like a lavish cinematic presentation of an elaborate stage-play. It's hardly surprising considering the Broadway pedigree of Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline, but the impression is underlined by the fact that the film's emphasis is laid squarely on the actors, and not on the plot, which is decidedly shaky: a study of the triangular relationship between a beautiful and mysterious Polish woman and her two

BLITZ

admirers. The result is, more than anything else, simply a vehicle for the considerable talents of Streep and Kline, but their remarkable performances are not quite enough to disguise the fact that the film is wholly contrived and completely hollow at the core.

XTRO (Polygram) **½
Dir. Harry Bromley Davenport. Bernice Stegers, Philip Sayer, Simon Nash (1982).

Decidedly low-budget British entry into the there's-an-alien-on-the-loose-and-it's-coming-this-way stakes. Nevertheless, it's all very watchable, despite an irritatingly intrusive synthesiser soundtrack which occasionally leads one to believe that it might not be an alien lurking in the bushes, but Gary Numan. Sam gets abducted by highly malevolent extra-terrestrials, then returns three years later to propagate his new kind while his estranged wife and her boyfriend try to pick up the pieces. The choice of a domestic rather than science-fiction setting is refreshingly original, though it's also economically necessary judging by the apparent size of the budget. The content varies between the genuinely imaginative, and the exceedingly tasteless – the scene in which a woman gives birth very messily to a fully grown adult is a bit on the strong side to say the least. Probably your only chance this year to see Robert Pereno from *Pleasure & the Beast* being devoured by a being from another planet.

VIOLENT STREETS (Warner) **½
Dir. Michael Mann. James Caan, Tuesday Weld, Robert Prosky (1981).



Apparently director Michael Mann spent three years researching the methods of high-tech, high-profit thieves for this film. You wouldn't notice it in the final product, a comparatively routine tale of a burglar (Caan) who specialises in very risky night-time jewellery heists. The whole thing is so Tough Hollywood that it's difficult to see much realistic presentation behind the pure fantasy. Perhaps it's the fault of Caan, a first-rate action star, but a second-rate actor. Forced to choose between a life of crime and settling down with the woman he loves, his moments of self-examination are about as convincing as Woody Allen playing American Football. The major nod towards cinema verite is some scrappy sound-recording which makes some of the more complicated parts difficult to follow, particularly when Caan sounds as if someone stuffed a handkerchief in his mouth. Still, the robbery sequences are gripping as hell, and it's a pity there aren't more of them. Prosky is very good as the robbery mastermind who puts Caan under contract to work for him.



THE SENDER
Directed by Roger Christian. Kathryn Harrold, Zeljko Ivanek, Shirley Knight.

■ IN THE final reckoning, *The Sender* cheats. Setting itself up as a blend of science fiction and psychological thriller, it exploits its unusual subject matter – the phenomenon of 'sending', a sort of telekinesis for weaklings, but just as deadly – to blur the line between reality and imagination.

In this way, the film operates on roughly the same level as a Hammer horror movie. All the elaborate special effects, concocted with detailed vividness by Nick Alder, whose other credits include *Alien* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, are designed to tease. 'Sending' refers to the invented power to communicate dreams. This gives a free and rather contrived rein to the

gruesome creations of Alder, director Roger Christian and writer Thomas Baum, who don't allow their 'Sender' too many garden parties when he shuts his eyes.

In the title role, Zeljko Ivanek obviously has greater problems than his name to contend with. His mother, for one, views her offspring as a contemporary Christ figure, as do most mothers, though this was a disturbing notion for me, who thought that Yugoslavia would be the last place for any Messiah to make a comeback. After a very public suicide attempt, the Sender finds himself in the psychiatric care of one Gail Farmer (Kathryn Harrold), although a speech therapist would seem more appropriate, since he's so traumatised by the whole affair that he scarcely utters a word throughout.

Gail Farmer is one of those fictional characters who ask spectres, ghosts and zombies to hang about while a witness is fetched to confirm the visitation. Inevitably, in this particular case, Jerolyn (Mrs Sender) has departed in suitably mysterious fashion, which does little for Gail in the eyes of her Nobel prize seeking superior, Mr Denman (Paul Freeman), who has been advising her to take holidays and not work so hard ever since she expressed the slightest doubt about this extraordinary patient.

This film survives, in fact, by leaving everything in doubt. The action is visually absorbing and well directed, and the idea is nothing if not original, even if the script travels a well-used route. There is tension and suspense in abundance, even if it thrives on our confusion. As you might expect, the special effects are fine.

□ MARK BRENNAN



Bullshot Crummond to the rescue

BULLSHOT
Directed by Dick Clement. Alan Shearman, Diz White, Ron House.

■ USING the talents of fringe theatre trio, Low Moan Spectacular, *Bullshot* charts the adventures of Captain Hugh 'Bullshot' Crummond in his attempts to defeat his old adversary, the dastardly Count Otto Von Bruno, and wicked accomplice Lenya (Frances Tomelty), while trying to rescue the girl he loves, the 'delectable' Miss Rosemary Fenton.

Crummond, whose impossibly impressive abilities include a nose for detection that would put Sherlock Holmes to shame, can out-run, out-row and outwit his worst enemies, even if he does fall flat on his face at the most inconvenient

moments. With tongue firmly in cheek he's yesterday's matinee idol, boy's own hero, and romantic lead.

All the sets, lighting and costumes have been designed and filmed with considerable care, evoking the genteel elegance of England in the late 1920's. Heaven is lovingly described as "England on a June afternoon – and we'll be beating Australia at cricket", and all that's legal, decent, honest and truthful is held in the highest esteem.

Written by Low Moan Spectacular and directed and produced by TV whizz kids Dick Clement and Ian la Frenais, *Bullshot* only suffers at the hands of the script, which tries too hard to be funny, and from the tendency to overdo the slapstick.

□ JUDY LIPSEY

THE NEW BOY

◇ Interview by Tim Hulse
◇ Photograph by Julian Simmonds

AT FIRST sight, there is nothing remarkable about Charles Kennedy. His hair is short and red. His features are youthful and his jutting jaw betrays his Scottish origins. His expression oscillates continually between deep concern and resolution. The day we met he was wearing a crisp, pale blue suit and a dark blue tie. He looked like a recent recruit to middle management. In reality, he is a recent recruit to management of the highest order.

On the night of June 9th this year, Charles Kennedy watched the General Election results coming in with more interest than most. He was standing as SDP candidate for the constituency of Ross, Cromarty and Skye in western Scotland. He knew his own result would be announced late the next day and went to bed thinking that he would come within a few hundred votes of victory, most probably just lose. The following evening he was elected with a majority of 1700. What is remarkable about Charles Kennedy is that he is just twenty-three years old and Britain's youngest MP.

BORN IN Fort William into a family which hovers somewhere in the grey area between working and middle class (his father is both crofter and draughtsman), Kennedy describes his upbringing as "very normal indeed". Although none of his family were directly involved in politics, at fifteen he joined the local Labour Party in a town which is "not exactly a hotbed of socialism".

It was at Glasgow University, where he began reading English and then changed to Politics and Philosophy, that his affiliation lapsed. At school, the young Kennedy had conceived a passion for public speaking which he took with him to university and became his major preoccupation there. It was a passion so strong that his then fellow socialists' lack of interest in the subject lost them his sympathy. "They thought it was a bit too esoteric and bourgeois and the luxury of the middle classes and all this. And so I never got involved much with the Labour Club there."

Success in debating at Glasgow led to a tour of Canada and America. "When I was on the tour I met somebody who I knew through debating who taught on Rhode Island and I was saying how much I liked the States and how I liked debating and would it be possible to combine the two. And so she put me in touch with Indiana University which runs a speech programme and when I graduated I applied for a Fulbright scholarship to go and study there. I got the scholarship and I got a position at the university teaching undergraduates and enrolled as a graduate student."

Kennedy had already joined the SDP just before the Crosby by-election and his involvement in Roy Jenkins' successful campaign at Glasgow Hillhead was enough to win him a place on the SDP candidates list. He put himself up for selection for Ross and Cromarty, thinking the seat winnable, and made a brief transatlantic trip to compete with five other prospective candidates for selection. For a seasoned debater, the test was tailor-made. "The

meeting just involved the six of us making a speech for ten or fifteen minutes then answering questions. And they go very much on your ability to speak up there."

Despite his youth, Kennedy got the nomination. During the campaign his age, which might have been seen as a disadvantage, was turned to positive use. "I think it helped, actually. I thought it would be one of our big weaknesses and so we went on the offensive about it rather than replying to criticisms. We said what we need is a new face and a young and energetic candidate. I think people went for that. Certainly since, the impression I get is that the constituency's rather pleased – because it's got the youngest MP it gets undue attention as a result."

Kennedy is willing to admit that the main reason for his victory was his ability to unite the anti-Tory vote, although he insists there was still a fair percentage voting positively for the Alliance. In the west of Scotland personalities count more than politics – the long-standing Tory MP, Hamish Gray, had lost favour and Kennedy took his chance. Whatever the reasons for his victory, he ended up as Honourable Member for a constituency which is geographically the largest in Britain. He says he is soon to be included in the Guinness Book Of Records as the youngest MP with the largest constituency. More important to Charles Kennedy is the fact that his win was the only SDP gain at the last election.

ALTHOUGH not rabidly nationalistic enough to join the SNP, Kennedy is both proud and very aware of being a Scot. While we were speaking on the terrace of the House of Commons, a Tory-looking chappie walked past. Seeing Kennedy, he stopped. "All you Scots members are down here during the recess," he said with a broad grin as if it were some kind of joke. "Just as well some of us are running the place, huh?" rejoined Kennedy, clearly miffed. Then when the other was out of earshot: "Who was that? That's the kind of attitude that annoys me, you know, that somehow we're second class citizens. That gets me annoyed. Prat!"

In fact, Kennedy rarely spends more than four nights of every week in London. Very much a constituency MP, he regularly returns to conduct surgeries at weekends. Hence questions about his impressions of the big city are met with genuine 'Don't know's': "I haven't really seen anything of it yet at all apart from Heathrow to the House of Commons. Literally."

All this rushing around demands a lot of commitment. Does the new MP have any regrets? "My one single regret – it's not a major regret, but it is a regret – is that I haven't more of a private life since this has all happened. The problem being twenty-three in this job is that there's obviously not a lot of twenty-three year-olds about. So although you don't notice it, I find it kind of creeps up on you – you realise that it's been quite a while since perhaps you've mixed or been out with somebody

of your own age-group and that's a bit unhealthy."

With crushing logic, it was decided by the elders of the SDP that Kennedy should make his maiden speech to the House on a private members motion concerning the future of the younger generation. It's nice to know they think about us occasionally down at Westminster, although apparently the debate took place on a Friday morning and the chamber was far from packed. Anyway, the new boy's speech was well received. "I basically dwelt on two observations that had occurred to me during the campaign about younger people – people of my age and younger, slightly older, I suppose, as well. One was that an awful lot of them kept saying to me during the election that they weren't going to vote because it didn't matter at all. And I think that's very bad for the political health of the nation, because if that remains it means we're going to have fewer and fewer people voting as time goes on. And the reason for that seemed to be that they thought that parties and their institutions weren't relevant and had failed them. And I couldn't agree more."

As far as Kennedy was concerned, the answer was some kind of devolution for Scotland which would involve people up there more in government, and for the rest of us an Alliance government which would change the institutions which were said to be at fault. I suppose it's inevitable that an MP should see everything in terms of party politics, and Charles Kennedy is no different. So when I asked rather hopefully if he associated with ideas of youth rebellion and suchlike, he replied that he was "in a party with those ideals."

To be honest, although he profits from the publicity which his age has brought him, such single-minded attention to what he sees as an irrelevance is becoming slightly tiresome. "I'm not as hung up about this age thing as everybody else seems to be. Really I don't lose sleep over it, I must admit. It gets a bit annoying sometimes, but not to the extent I'd want to pack the job in or wish I was doing something else. I mean to me no matter what you're doing there's no point in pretending to be other than what you are. And if that means you're a twenty-three year-old who's an MP in the House of Commons, then that's what you are. If I try and behave like a thirty-three year-old or a thirteen year-old, then people are going to look at me rather stupidly. So I behave as what I am. And to date as far as my constituency goes, which is where there's the most interest in me so far, from what I can gather people seem to be quite content with my performance."

A fair point. It's up to the constituents of Ross, Cromarty and Skye to judge whether their young MP is up to the job, since that is where his most important work is done. He naturally has no say in and no influence upon the decisions of government, especially when one considers the present huge majority which the Tories enjoy in the House. As one of a parliamentary party of only six, he does have responsibilities as spokesman on Scotland and the Welfare State – an enviable position for a young MP. A Tory MP of similar age



The Right Honourable Charles Kennedy M.P.

might get to make one speech to the House in a whole year if he was lucky. Kennedy's appearances will be considerably more frequent and hence his experience the greater. He is rapidly becoming a very valuable asset indeed to his party.

A self-effacing character, Kennedy describes himself as "very ordinary" and his list of likes includes music, humour, conversation and 'company'. I was convinced such a golden boy goodie goodie must have some fairly serious character defects to set off this history of success, so I asked him what he considered to be his faults. "I'm not a punctual person." An obvious one that, since he had arrived for the interview half an hour late. What else? He thought long and hard. "I sometimes find it a bit difficult to relax." This answer reminded me of job application forms where I would always describe my major fault as a tendency to work too hard (I wouldn't try it - it never worked for me).

Kennedy is giving nothing away. Throughout our talk, he was reluctant to talk about himself as an individual in anything other than the most general terms. It's partly because he's very wary of saying anything which might be misrepresented in his constituency and count against him at the next election. It's also partly because he doesn't often get asked these sort of things. For the moment he is completely absorbed in his role as MP and seems to be coping as well as anyone else.

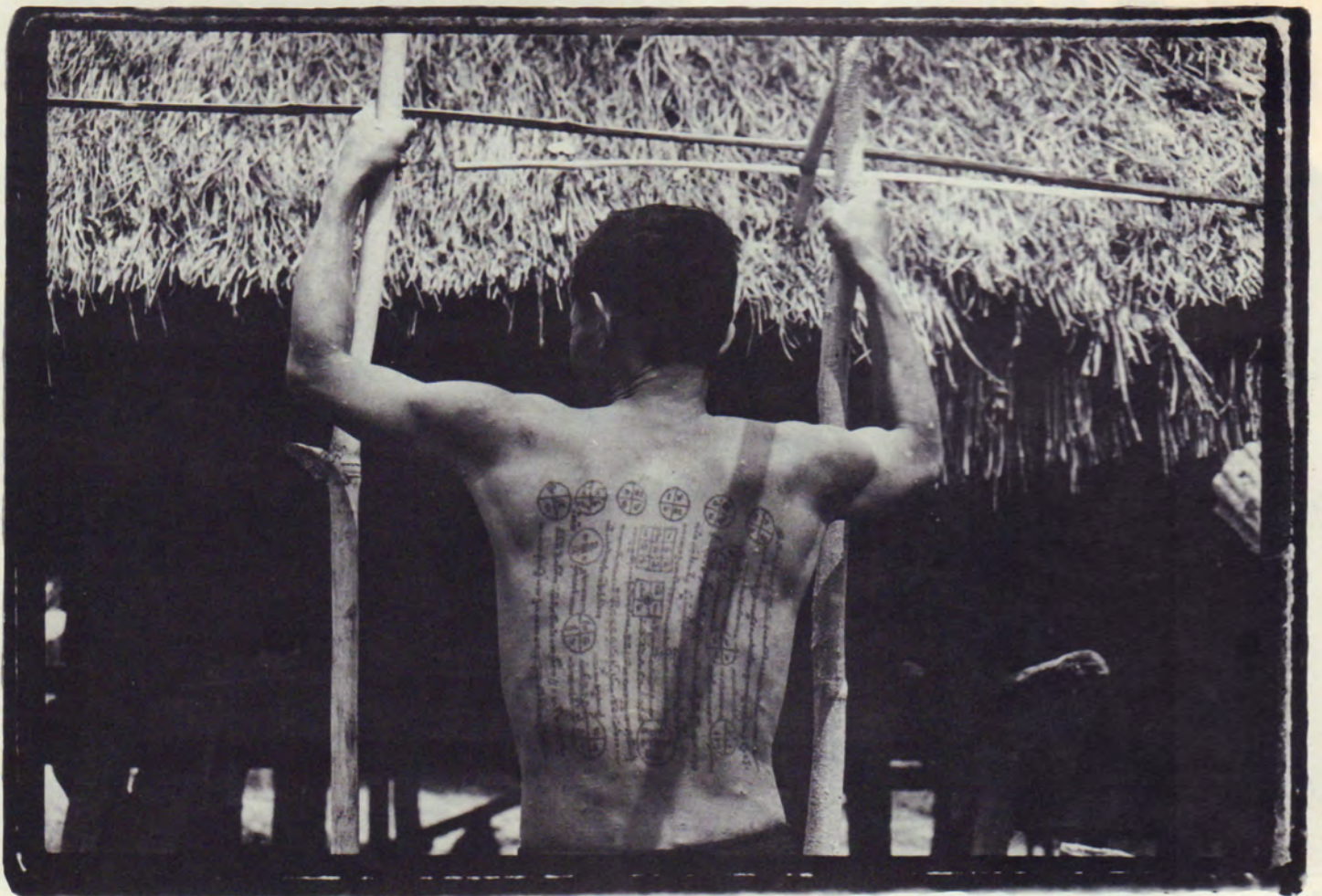
To be honest, you'd never know he was twenty-three.

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MP

AT

23





PORTFOLIO

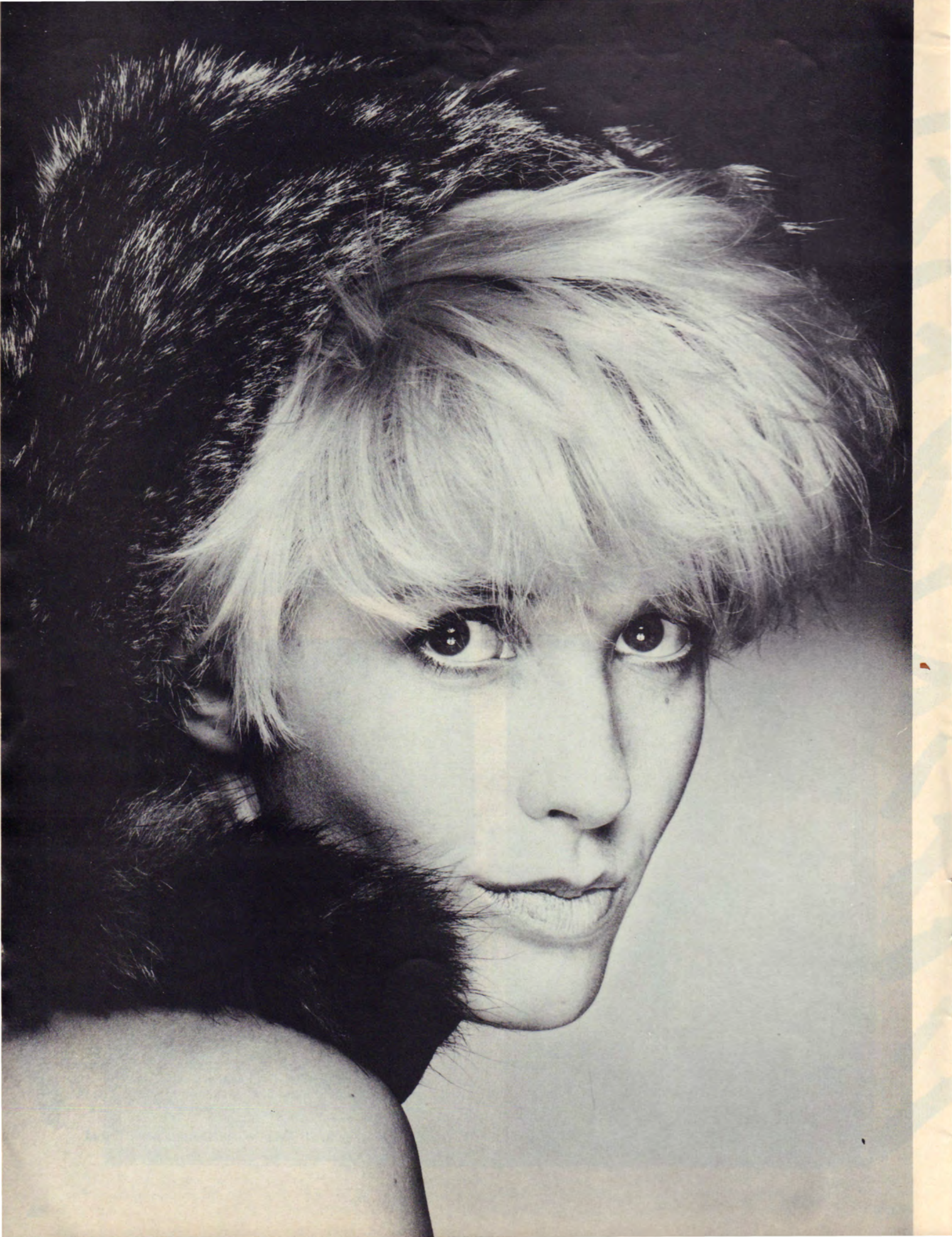
CHRIS WROBLEWSKI

Influences: Lewis Hine, Edward Weston, Minor White.

Exhibitions: numerous, including Side Gallery and Spectro Gallery in Newcastle; Rob Gallery in Amsterdam and New York; Midland Gallery in Nottingham; Polaroid Travelling Show.

Publications: *Skin Show - The Art and Craft of Tattooing*; *City Indians - Western Tribal Fashion* (City Indians available at selected shops including Virgin Records, Compendium, Arts Council Bookshop, Colletts, Ian Shipley, or by mail from Martin Knox, 14 Loughborough Avenue, Sneinton, Nottingham NG2 4LD. Price £7.95.)

These pictures taken in SE Asia for forthcoming book Tribal Contacts.



THE PERILS OF PAULA

Interview by Tim Hulse
Photographs by Bob Geldof (colour)
and Brian Aris (black & white)

I was once judging a competition when a young boy with acne wandered up to me and asked, 'Do they use trick photography on you on telly?'

'No,' I replied shortly. 'Why?'

He took a step back to peruse every inch of me.

'Well, it's just that you're a right dog in the flesh.'

(Paula Yates, from *Blondes*)

MY OWN FIRST impressions of Paula Yates 'in the flesh' took second place to the effects of the rocket-like capabilities of the elevator at London Weekend TV's headquarters on the South Bank. As I stepped out onto the tenth floor, I was less concerned with the diminutive figure awaiting me than I was with the problem of whether to go back down and collect my stomach or just have it posted on to me later.

Looking bee-like in a black and yellow hooped mini-dress, Paula led me to her office. As a child, my studies of entomology taught me that the worker bee sends messages to its colleagues in the hive by means of an elaborate dance ritual which involves much wiggling of the rear quarters. As Paula passed by, her fellow workers seemed unimpressed by the significance of the highly accentuated movements of her behind. I for my part studied it closely. When we finally reached our destination, no message had become apparent, but it did strike me that when the time came to leave I would have no idea whatsoever how to find my way out again.

"I HATE DOING this," says Paula as she flops onto a sofa. Her voice is a strange hybrid of Sloane and Street and she half admits that she's deliberately toned down the accent which her upper middle class upbringing bequeathed to her. It's now eight years since she left public school in Oxford to begin a career which has embraced writing, modelling and television. At the moment, she's working as a presenter on LWT's *Six O'Clock Show*. A light-hearted look at more off-beat happenings in the capital, it's fairly typical of Paula's work to date – tongue in cheek, trivial and, just occasionally, very funny indeed.

Despite the breadth of her activities, Paula sees herself first and foremost as a writer and is very honest about her abilities. "I think I'm quite funny. That's all I see my strength as and I do think that people laugh. I get lots and lots of letters and I have very good reaction from fairly cynical publishers who do laugh. And that's all I want people to do. I don't particularly want them to sit and muse or think and I don't really care what happens to the book the year after."

Certainly Paula's first book, *Rock Stars In Their Underpants*, didn't qualify her as one of the major contributors to twentieth century thought. As the title suggests, the book was a collection of photographs of popstars in their underwear with 'brief' commentaries by Paula. Only a twisted New Yorker could take it seriously. And of course Andy Warhol did. "He rang up and said, 'God, it's just the greatest work of art of the last decade, you've just gotta remember that,' and he wrote asking for an autographed copy. I suppose it was such

ephemera that it would have appealed to him."

Paula's second book, written for children, was entitled *A Tail Of Two Kitties*, a story about her two cats. Illustrated in the old-fashioned way by Sophie Wyndham, its content is somewhat less orthodox. "It's got plenty of swearing and violence. We had lots of problems before we brought it out because the publishers suddenly got very worried that child psychologists would think it was dangerous. But they're nice to do, kids' books. They're not any good for the readies, they're just good to do because you want to and they're nice looking." Paula has also written a sequel, which has yet to be published. Also yet to be published is her first novel, *Cold Wind Over Clapham*, a pastiche of romantic fiction.

Unlikely as it may seem, Paula's writing career actually began at *Record Mirror*. Already at this time living with Bob Geldof, she seems to have spent most of her time interviewing her friends. Later, a cover session with *Cosmopolitan* led to a fairly regular column which she still does. It's a fairly frivolous affair, as one might expect, with liberal sprinklings of the Yates wit, where Paula recounts her recent activities, be it parachuting or pregnancy, lifting weights or having a crush.

Paula's latest book, published this month, is called *Blondes*. Subtitled *A History From Their Earliest Roots*, it recounts tales of blondehood starting with Eve and running through the centuries right up to such blondes of today as Princess Di and Fiona Richmond. "What did you think of it?" she asked anxiously. I said it was a lot better than I thought it would be. "Oh, I'm sure you thought I was going to be absolutely gormless," she replied.

Paula is very proud of *Blondes*. Beautifully illustrated and consistently amusing, it's her one written work which she thinks posterity might smile upon. The book's basic premise is stated early on: 'Blondes do indeed have more FUN. The pursuit of blonde hair became one of womankind's Great Aims. While men aspired to captivate a blonde, women aspired not to have two inches of black roots.'

The implication that one's life will change drastically after the simple purchase of a bottle of peroxide is obviously patent twaddle, but it makes for a good read, so Paula is sticking to her guns. "I was talking to Miriam Stoppard about it and she said she'd once gone to a party wearing a blonde wig and immediately started flirting and being terribly jolly. I dyed my hair red for the day about three weeks ago, which was the first time I'd ever had a different colour and I looked just like the girl at school who you feel really sorry for. When I got into cabs I thought, 'Ooh, I'm so plain.' It was dreadful. And I think that's what it comes down to, it's a very shallow thing. I don't think there's any great meaning to being a blonde, but I do think it affects people radically, how they behave once they have got blonde hair."

At this point, were I French, I would have said 'Bof!' and made vigorous hand gestures. As it was, I acquiesced and asked Paula when she first became a blonde. After all, I'm a blonde too and this sounded like FUN.

Paula's bloneness dates back to age twelve. "The only reason I had my hair dyed was because I was very very ugly when I was little, really awful-looking – I did actually look like Bruce Forsyth. And my mother was horrified because she was incredibly glamorous, staggeringly glamorous, and couldn't believe that she had this terrible-looking toad for a daughter. So one day she just said, 'I think if we dyed your hair it would make a great improvement' and whisked me off to the hairdressers. And I actually did look considerably better."

According to her book, Paula had coveted bloneness since she was six, when she fell in love with Virna Lisi in *How to Murder Your Wife*: 'Virna leaped into my life out of an enormous cake, dressed in a bikini made of whipped cream. She rose out of it like the birth of Venus and I was smitten with Cupid's dart across the Tivoli Llandudno.'

These days, Paula's personality is applied to her



hair once a week (by Michael and Nicky at John Frieda, if you're interested). "Touch it," she said, lunging towards me. I did. "It doesn't feel like a Brillo pad at all, does it?" It doesn't. "You know how some people's hair goes horrible."

JUDGING solely from Paula's writing and television appearances, one might assume that she was incapable of serious thought. But that doesn't worry her in the least. "It would be impossible for me to be very serious. Although I'm not actually silly all the time. I'm not at all silly at home, I'm awfully boring and I actually am terribly responsible. But I couldn't be like that publicly." In her own terms, Paula may be a blonde in public, but in private it's her black roots which show through. I wondered if she ever felt a need to prove that she's more than just the 'wisecracking blonde bombshell' that the cover blurb of her book dubbed her. After all, she's by no means an intellectual retard — she took her O-levels at thirteen and her A's at sixteen. "No, I don't have an urge to prove myself. I don't have an urge to justify myself either. But that's probably why now I hardly ever do interviews, because normally it results in me trying to justify myself and I don't see the point. It's like trying to make people think you're a nice person. You know, because they think if you've made some money or if you've got something that they would like, you have to immediately justify yourself, that you're quite nice *really*. But there's no point. And I feel the same way about work, because I do work jolly hard and I think the success of the things that I've done so far has proved that there is a market for things that are just light."

The one less than generous reception which Paula has encountered was when she began working as a presenter on *The Tube*. Perhaps she lacked credibility through her association with Bob Geldof and the New Wave old guard; perhaps she didn't take the music seriously enough; perhaps they were just jealous — for whatever reason, the music press brought out the knives. Suddenly it became fashionable to hate Paula Yates. Keith Allen's wicked 'Trawler Bates' impersonations were nothing compared to the venom which flew from the music press in Carnaby Street and beyond. It all got a bit out of hand. "I think I must actually represent in one small body everything that they loathe and there's no way I would want to be any different, because I know exactly what they think is quite good and I despise everything they think is quite good with a vengeance. I must say I think it was a bit harder, even though it sounds a bit wet, because I was pregnant and there were *awful* references to abortions and dead babies all the time and I *did* find that quite distressing. This is tasteless and it just made me *really* upset. I used to hate it, then after the first two weeks I never read it again, along with most of the general public." Paula is not appearing in the second series of *The Tube* because she didn't want to get stuck in the rut of 'young people's programmes.' "To be absolutely honest, I wanted to do a grown-ups' programme. I didn't really want to be an eternal teenager and I think with pop shows, unless you only do them for quite a brief spate of time or go back and forth from them, you never do anything else. And a life eternally interviewing pop stars I think would be a bit unhappy."

When she was younger, Paula Yates' ambition was "to get married and have babies". She now has a baby, Fifi, and has lived with Bob Geldof for seven years, although without actually getting him up the aisle ("Every time we went past a church I used to cough and give him a nudge"). Today, her ambitions remain purely domestic. "My ambition now is to have lots of babies and to manage to carry on keeping myself in the manner I'm

accustomed to. I think inevitably if you're involved in the media — a horrible word, isn't it, the media, it makes you think of a load of horrible advertising executives drinking lager — I think you always think every job might be your last and your novelty value might vanish. And I'm quite insecure and so I do worry about that, because I'm quite materialistic, in fact I'm *very* materialistic. I want lots of things all the time. If it all got snatched away, I'd have a fit, cos I would be so hopeless at starving in a garret, I actually would."

Bohemia is certainly a long way off at the moment. Paula buys her clothes from Jasper Conran and the Emmanuels and she and Bob have two homes — a flat in London and a country house in Kent. It's a curiously old-fashioned household — Paula does all the cooking and cleaning while Bob confines himself to "boys' jobs", whatever they are. "I mean, God, chauvinism is alive and kicking in our house. But it honestly doesn't matter to me at all. I don't feel at all stamped upon or repressed. I just think it's actually a lot easier if I do it. It's convenience." It's especially convenient seeing that Bob can't cook. "Nor does Bob know what laundry is or any of these things. These are alien concepts to him."

IT'S A MEASURE of Paula's success that she no longer has to live in the shadow of Bob Geldof's name. "The papers always have to have some kind of hook to put on you and mine was 'Bob Geldof's Girlfriend' or 'Punk'. In fact they still call me a punk. It *really* annoys me. It annoys me more than *anything*, actually. There's me thinking I'm being really glamorous and they're saying 'Punky Paula Yates'. Last week on the show I nearly fainted. Suddenly everything went

completely blank in front of my eyes and I had this really loud noise in my head. The last vision I had as I sort of grappled with myself was the cover of the *Mirror*. I could just see it — "PUNKY PRESENTER PITCHES FORWARD". But now I've done so many different things that on the whole they're just able to call me Paula Yates."

When I suggested that perhaps she had even eclipsed Bob Geldof in some people's eyes, Paula suddenly looked very worried indeed. "I certainly don't think that people think of him in terms of me. I'm sure they don't. No, they certainly don't. I mean why on earth would you think of *him*, somebody like him, in terms of some squirt? It's not sensible."

Bob certainly takes second place in Paula's affections at the moment. Clearly besotted by her newly born child, she tries not to be too gooey on the subject, although there was a brief period of "I'm so happy. I'm so delighted" when I was afraid she might slither off the sofa. Fifi Geldof had just left when I arrived. Apparently she's a dead ringer for Elizabeth Taylor (which means she's got dark hair — no FUN for her). Paula is getting used to a changed perspective. "It just changes your outlook a bit. Things that you thought were important before aren't quite so important. I mean at the moment what's important for me is getting this house I want because I need an extra bedroom for Fifi now. Before, that wasn't particularly important. Frocks aren't particularly important anymore cos it's much nicer to sit around and cuddle a baby than to go out for dress fittings. You know what I mean? It's actually made me less frivolous and shallow... Good thing that, eh?"

I think the joke was on me.
Blondes is published by Michael Joseph on November 14. £6.95 (softback); £12.50 (hardback).



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**BARCLAYS**

A MATTER OF STYLE

◆ Words by Steve Turner

BY THEIR words shall ye know them. Every age has its vocabulary of style and by isolating the key words we can discover what's really reckoned to be important. The fifties borrowed from jazz (*cool, crazy, hip, square, flip, dig*) and portrayed an excitable generation keen to live instinctively and stay *with it*. The next decade began with fun-filled fantasy words that sounded as though they were bought at Habitat (*switched on, groovy, fab, swinging, rave, offbeat, dolly*) and ended in a mind boggled haze (*far out, freaky, mind blowing, heavy, vibes, turned on, high, cosmic, weird, trip*).

The seventies was a mixture of Californian dream (*mellow, laid-back*) and New York decadence (*bizarre, wasted, raunchy, glam, gonzo*) until punk when it became more important to be *basic* and *direct*. Music was shorn of excess technique and *energy* became the significant quality. Bands were best if they emerged from the *garage*, musicians if they were off *the street*.

There are no new words for the eighties but the ones we've got get used for everything from a new single to an attitude towards life and in the process have been rendered almost meaningless. Everyone, for example, talks about *funky* but who knows what it means? *Camp* is used to describe everyone from John Inman to Mari Wilson. *Chic* is tagged onto anything vaguely fashionable.

BLITZ chose ten current words cropping up in interviews, reviews, essays and fashion commentaries and besides offering its own definition asked a writer, a designer, a celebrity and two pop stars what these words meant to them.

++ PAUL WELLER

Former leader of The Jam, now with The Style Council.

++ PETER YORK

Style correspondent for *Harpers & Queen*. Author of *Style Wars* and *The Official Sloane Ranger Handbook*.

++ SUE CLOWES

Fabric and fashion designer, best known for her work with Boy George and Culture Club.

++ STEVE STRANGE

Celebrity. Singer, songwriter, face about town and part-owner of *The Camden Palace*.

++ BOY GEORGE

Culture Club.

● CHIC



Chic: Yves St. Laurent?

FRENCH for 'stylish' or 'elegant' the word evokes Parisian high fashion and expensive taste although journalists have been using the word as a replacement for 'fashionable'. Tagged onto another word, as with Peter York's *Reactionary Chic*, it signifies the voguish adoption of some previously despised or ignored attitude. Tom Wolfe created the usage in 1970 with his essay *Radical Chic* which detailed the patronage of the revolutionary Black Panthers by members of New York's high society cocktail set and continued it with *Funky Chic*, an examination of the middle class trend for dressing down in faded denim and ruffled hair. Even BLITZ bannered *Revolution Chic* on its July/August cover!

Paul Weller: "I think of the group when I hear that word. I like the way their bass and guitar merge together. In terms of fashion the word sounds boring. I prefer to think of guitars!"

Peter York: "It means a certain kind of Euro person, seal-like French ladies with their hair pulled back. The Margot Fonteyn look. When I use it with another word - Terrorist Chic, for instance - it means borrowed style, a style used rather than owned."

Sue Clowes: "It's *Way In* at Harrods isn't it? It's aspiring for the elegant look, the look of grace and wealth."

Steve Strange: "Bourgeois people who like to show the labels on the outside of their suits. 'Oh, is that Armani? Oh darling it's so *chic*.'"

Boy George: Culture Club, Alison Hay (Roy's wife), San Lorenzo's, Langan's Brasserie, Hyde Park on a pushbike, Egypt.

● CAMP



Camp: Oscar Wilde?

POPULARLY associated with the homosexual tendency towards exaggerated gesture and theatrical behaviour. It was defined in 1954 by novelist Christopher Isherwood as "expressing what's basically serious to you in terms of fun and artifice and elegance". A decade later, Susan Sontag, in her *Notes On Camp*, centred on its meaning as seeing things as good because they're so bad. Mark Booth in *Camp* (Quartet, 1983) says "To be camp is to present oneself as being committed to the marginal with a commitment greater than the marginal merits." Clearly a word with a future. Paul Weller: "Amusing. I've met a couple of people like that."

Peter York: "Camp used to mean a way of looking at things that were real and now it means a manufactured thing like *Soap* which is conscious camp, a contradiction in terms. What's joyous about camp is it's something people have been completely mad about but have got out of balance." Sue Clowes: "The tacky, slightly irritating, side of homosexuality. I can't see it in clothes."

Steve Strange: "I get called it quite a bit but I'm not - neither in the bitchy sense or in the 'Oh, it's so camp' sense. To me it's people who perform on stage at the Black Cap, a drag club in Camden."

Boy George: "Steve Strange, Concentration, Edna Everage, Danny La Rue, Quentin Crisp, Oscar Wilde, Hilda Ogden, Bet Lynch."

Steve Strange:
"Image: a hard thing to keep changing"



DAVID LEVINE



Boy George:
"Style: Rod Stewart's haircut"

STREET CREDIBILITY



Street Cred: Bruce Springsteen?

THE MYTHICAL 'street' beloved of those who prize integrity denotes 'of the people' and is based on the idea that purity is most intact amongst those whose evaluation is least corrupted by commercial consideration. The Beat writers of the fifties idealised poor blacks, junkies, pimps and pool hall hustlers as did Colin MacInnes in his London novel *Absolute Beginners* (1959). Similarly rock'n'roll was early on identified with delinquency, bike boys and New York street gangs. Punk revived the notion with its 'garage bands' and Joe Strummer's assertion that "The truth is only known by gutter snipes" (*Garageland* - The Clash). Significantly the Sex Pistols were more or less picked off the street by Malcolm McLaren who has said "The best ideas come from the gutter". His subsequent

involvement with the rappers, scratchers and breakers of the Bronx is a further attempt to lift ideas from the gutter to the turntable. More self-consciously *street* is Bruce *Born To Run* Springsteen with his appropriately named E Street Band.

Paul Weller: "No-one knows what it means any more. It did mean something but it's become a cliché. I thought it meant honesty".

Peter York: "A joke now, but very serious between '76 and '78. Today the idea of 'the street' turns up in jeans and Renault adverts. It's a most ridiculous idea. Lee Jeans: 'Mean On The Street'! It's a hoot! Can they mean the streets of Potters Bar? I think it actually comes out of an experience English people don't have, which is of street danger because, in general, street danger is not very widespread in this country."

Sue Clowes: "That reminds me of programmes like *Switch* and the presenters with a little bit of fading colour in their hair. Or Nicky Picasso who used to present *Riverside*. They usually have cockney accents and try to be 'in with the kids'. They drop their 'p's and q's' to sound hip. They maybe have one little dreadlock and a bit of faded pink in the fringe."

Steve Strange: "The Whiskey A Go-Go in L.A. where everyone slags everyone off and then they leave in their Porsches."

Boy George: "JoBoxers, Paul Weller, Adrian Thrills and NME, Birthday Party, Rip Rig and Panic, The Daily Star."

DECADENT



Decadent: Fellini's *Satyricon*?

DECADENCE is really the condition of decline, but in the early seventies was adopted as a self-conscious style by rock acts such as Lou Reed, David Bowie and the New York Dolls, and in films such as *Cabaret* (Berlin in the Thirties) and *Satyricon* (Last days of Rome). As a style it had to have self-indulgent opulence, or at least the impression of it, and a hint of bizarre sexuality. In his 1979 book *Decadence: The Strange Life Of An Epithet* Richard Gilman suggests that true decadence involves flabbiness, luxury, sensuality, a loss of nerve and skill and an excessive concern with formal perfection at the expense of content.

Paul Weller: "A lot of people with too much money who don't know what to do with it. Worse still, the same sort of people pretending they haven't got money."

Peter York: "A rather used-up word pre-empted by *Cabaret* - 'Divine Decadence'. Its use has been cyclical because in the early seventies it was a term of affirmation, something people would now call stylish, and then in the later seventies my friends used it in the old way as a pejorative term, almost like an old-fashioned Stalinist - decadent capitalist rubbish and so on."

Sue Clowes: "Everything rich and sumptuous. The opposite of The Camden Palace. It reminds me of the bedroom in the film *Sunset Boulevard* where she has a bed in the shape of a boat."

Steve Strange: "*Cabaret*. Berlin in the thirties."

Boy George: "Sex Gang Children, Sex Pistols, Malcolm McLaren, Yoko Ono and May Pang, Camden Palace, Prince."

POSER



Poser: Kings Road?

ONCE A pejorative term like *ligger* and *freeloader*, posing has been raised to the level of an art form by the likes of Steve Strange and Boy George who both emerged from being Blitz Kids into national pop figures. In an age of enforced leisure, posing becomes a way of achieving, and in London, at least, the King's Road, Leicester Square and South Molton Street are three of the best places to do it. Smart posers even know how to get paid by tourists anxious for snaps of weirdo English kids to take back home. Posing is personal stardom based on style and appearance. As Thomas Carlyle once wrote of the Dandy; "As others dress to live, he lives to dress."

Paul Weller: "There are the little serious ones, who're really boring, then the others who do it for a laugh - which I can see the point of. The French and the Italians do it instinctively. I can handle that."

Peter York: "A great word with a great history. A good thing to be. Very much in vogue three years ago amongst amateur anthropologists doing stuff about the Blitz Club. I always thought it was a good word and I think the motive is admirable. A noble art."

Sue Clowes: "Someone standing in a certain position and making out they stand that way all the time. Usually someone who wears all the stuff but hasn't got a lot to say."

Steve Strange: "I think Johnny Rotten popularised that word when he used to insult his audiences. To me the poser is probably the one shouting it out because they're jealous. There probably is such a thing but I wouldn't want to label anyone as a poser. If someone is dressing up and going out of their way, they're doing what they believe in."

Boy George: "Mr Chow's, Harrods, Joan Collins, Alana Stewart, Tramps, Annabell's, The White Elephant, Andy Warhol."



Sue Clowes:
"Macho: a bloke who's musclebound and a bit dim"

● IMAGE



Image: Grace Jones?

WHEN RICHARD Nixon was running for President in 1968 one of his advisers wrote in a brief to the staff: "it's not what's there that counts, it's what's projected", and image is all to do with what's projected. It's the careful editing and focusing of personality and appearance to create an impression. In the case of public figures this means manipulating the media. In his 1961 book *The Image*, Daniel Boorstin characterises the movie star's image as "the capacity to be made into a trademark".

Paul Weller: "I think of a lot of pop groups when I hear that word. It sounds like sales technique. If someone is just going out for a night I'd class that as 'style' rather than 'image'."

Peter York: "A late fifties, early sixties word which is itself about an image of advertising. It came out of advertising and reflected an enchantment with media and particularly with television. When I think of 'Image' I think of Andrew 'Loog' Oldham [the original Rolling Stones Manager] because he set up a PR company called *Image* which was of course tongue-in-cheek."

Sue Clowes: "Fashion is all to do with image. People either dress up to have the same image as everyone else or they create their own kind of image."

Steve Strange: "A hard thing to keep changing! When I used to create an image for a video I used to live it out. I no longer do that. It got a bit too much. I stopped doing it after I did the *Pleasure Boys* video based on Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* because it just wasn't me riding around on an old Harley."

Boy George: "Duran Duran."

● FUNKY



Funky: James Brown?

NOW APPLIED to everything from music to countries. It was originally black American slang for female sexual odour and got incorporated into jazz terminology. In 1959 Lawrence Lipton included it in his glossary of Beat Generation slang, defining it as "Old French, *funicle* - terrible. In the forties, Mezz Mezzrow defined it as stench, smelly, obnoxious. Today it means 'that happy-sad feeling' according to some jazz musicians." Picked up by soul musicians in the early sixties it came to mean a loose rhythmic sound typified by

James Brown, and from that it began to mean anything - a restaurant, a house, a way of walking - that was somehow relaxed, loose or earthy.

Paul Weller: "Music that makes you want to get up. The definition is any James Brown record. The geezer's always had it and he's still got it."

Peter York: "It's funny but it's also rude. When I first heard the word I didn't realise how rude it was. I was very shocked. Actually to me it doesn't mean what Tom Wolfe wrote in *Funky Chic*. It means certain things to do with black people in terms of rhythm - wet-look hair even."

Sue Clowes: "I never actually use the word. I think of someone playing a bass guitar up and down the frets."

Steve Strange: "Too Americanised, used in clubs by people trying to be hip. It has a meaning when describing music but not clothes. If it's James Brown then that's fine."

Boy George: "Mikey Craig, Rick James, Aretha Franklin, New Edition, James Brown, Virgin Records."

● ETHNIC



Ethnic: Back to roots?

THERE'S a belief that all things ethnic are somehow purer than those Western products tainted by commercial interest. Although ethnic simply means "deriving from the cultural traditions of a group of people", it's popularly understood to mean the Third World. Ethnic Swedish or Belgian doesn't quite make it, but a shirt actually bought in The Gambia or a location recording made in the jungles of South America is beyond criticism. Rastafarians are ethnic, Burundi drummers are ethnic, the WOMAD festival is ethnic. David Bowie recently discovered aborigines, Malcolm McLaren recorded tribal musicians in Africa and South America for his *Duck Rock* album.

Paul Weller: "Over-used. I'm not sure what it's supposed to mean really. I use it to take the piss because I think of all those middle-class hippies who use that word."

Peter York: "A joke one. I think of a certain cross-weave cloth and early seventies 'earth girls', particularly noticeable in higher education, who wore skirts that just went straight down to the ground. I can't bear ethnic music. It usually has a relevance to the people whose 'eth' it is: all these people who're terribly keen on Gold Coast dance music in a way that they'd never be keen on North Hendon Bar Mitzvah music. They're keen on it because it's obscure and horrible."

Sue Clowes: "Itchy jumpers and beads."

Steve Strange: "Should've stayed in the sixties."

Boy George: "Brown rice, Marilyn, Hayzi Fantayzee (well, they try), Bob Marley, kaftans, Gandhi."

● STYLE



Style: David Bowie?

TO BE SAID to possess style is today's supreme compliment, for style transcends fashion while often using it and embraces more than appearance. It's an expression of individualism which comes out in speech patterns, mannerisms, dress, home decoration and even the way a cigarette is held or a pavement is walked. As the old song said, "It ain't what you do/It's the way that you do it". Mods were obsessed with style. David Bowie and Bryan Ferry have sold an image of style. Style in clothing is well defined by Alison Lurie in her book *The Language of Fashion*: "Just as a gifted writer combines unexpected words and images, risking the reputation of being deranged, so certain gifted persons have been able to combine odd items of clothing, old and new, native and foreign, into a brilliant eloquence of personal statement."

Paul Weller: "I think of Dietrich and Garbo. It's a kind of individualism — the way you carry yourself, mannerisms, everything. A lot of my friends have it and so do a lot of kids you see walking around. Style Council was on a poster a friend saw in a shop window. I liked the sound of the words and wanted to use them somewhere."

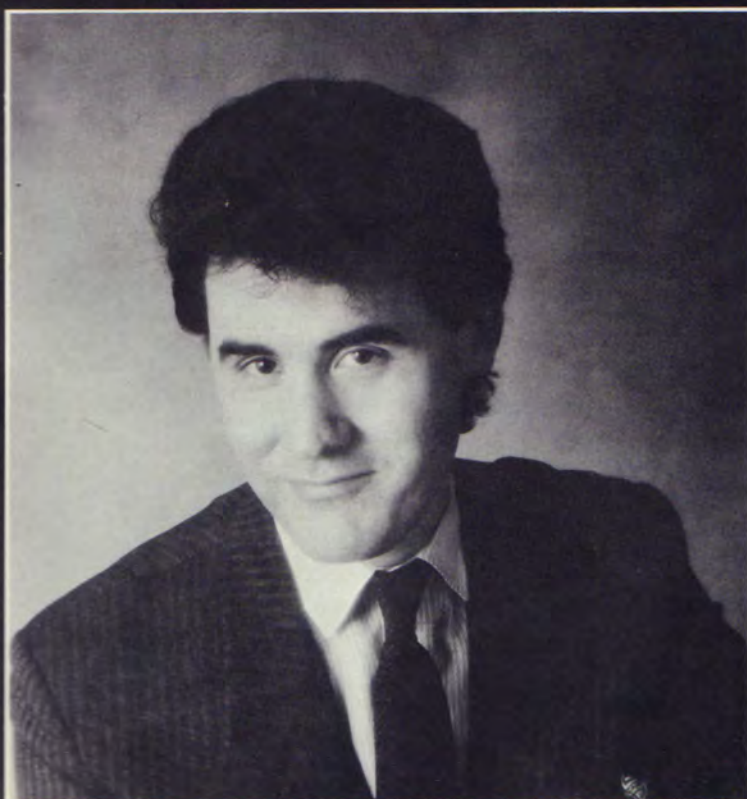
Peter York: "Hazy. It just describes the terrain of hostilities. It doesn't actually mean anything. It did provide an excellent pun for the title of my historic work *Style Wars* though!"

Sue Clowes: "It takes someone who really understands the word to know if someone's got it. A tramp can have style without knowing it because it's a way of life, a persona. People think a photo of Bowie with a cigarette denotes style but he's simply portraying elegance and things like a thirties feel which they think make style, but I think it's something that comes from within a person. There's no relationship whatsoever between fashion and style. A stylish person could wear sackcloth and carry it off."

Steve Strange: "You can't buy it. It's not the way you dress but the way you carry yourself — the way you walk or hold a cup. I think Siouxsie is stylish. Boy George is stylish and so is Marilyn. I think Peter York is stylish. I can go to Antony Price's house and say that he's stylish by the way he does his garden."

Boy George: "Huge tartan flairs, satin Bay City Roller scarves, Rod Stewart's haircut, Annie Lennox, Strawberry Switchblade, Liz Taylor, Dolly Parton, Siouxsie Banshee."

Peter York: "Poser: a noble art"



Paul Weller: "Funky: any James Brown record"



● MACHO



Macho: Lou Ferrigno?

PHOTO: NEUNCRECIBLE LOU FERRIGNO

A WORD brought into vogue by feminists and gays. Machismo is the Mexican-Spanish and Macho the Spanish for male but in current usage it means an exaggerated masculinity. New York gays developed the 'Christopher Street Clone' — short hair, moustache, plaid work-shirt, leather belt, straight leg blue jeans and boots — based on the Manhattan construction worker. This image, typified by the Marlboro Man, has become the stereotypical gay clone throughout the

west. Heavy Metal singers are usually macho men (long Viking hair, bare chest, metal bracelets, skin tight trousers) and the Village People created an image based on American macho types (Indian chief, biker, policeman, cowboy, construction worker). Now even female singers can be macho — Helen Terry of Culture Club, Annie Lennox of Eurythmics, Grace Jones. **Paul Weller:** "Boring. Just so straight and boring."

Peter York: "I think of women because it's a word that has been taken away from its roots. Today it means people being aggressive and standing up for their rights. It's a word that's been desexualised. Then I also think of the standard gay clone set-up."

Sue Clowes: "A bloke who's muscle-bound but a bit dim usually with leather and tight trousers. A night at *Heaven*."

Steve Strange: "I don't like the word because I don't like the gay syndrome that means you've got to have a moustache to get into a club."

Boy George: "Margaret Thatcher, Princess Di, The Queen, Christina Onassis, Kenneth Williams, Lionel Blair."

Rik Mayall is in the uncomfortably double-edged position of being well-known enough to make a living, but too well-known to be credible as his creations Kevin Turvey and Rik the Poet. SIMON GARFIELD spoke to him in Edinburgh during the run of Standup Comedy with Ben Elton and Andy de la Tour. Photographs by STEVE SHIPMAN (this page) and ANGUS ROBERTSON (over).

ADE EDMONDSON – better known as Vivian in *The Young Ones* – died in Edinburgh eight weeks ago. And it was Festival time as well. Rik Mayall broke the news at a sell-out fringe venue for three weeks. His act was billed as Twentieth Century Coyote, he said, the name he and Ade had performed as together for six years since they left Manchester University. But now Ade was dead, knocked down by a bus.

As Mayall announced the tragedy, and the fact that a lot of people would already have read about it in the morning's papers, most of the audience felt queasy, chilly, and generally pretty awful. This was a comedian after all, and they had paid £3 to be entertained.

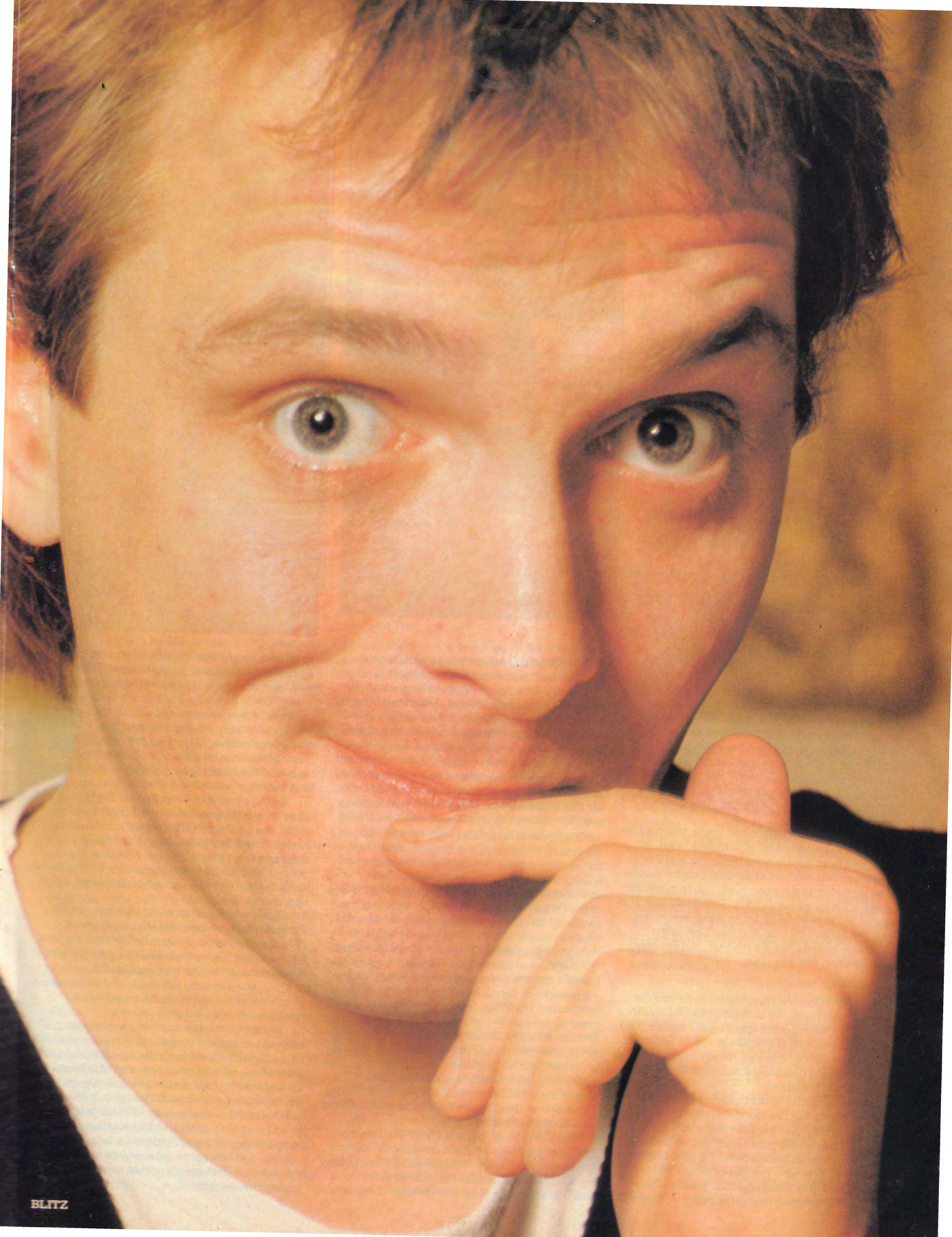
A handful of people actually laughed, thinking it was some sort of ludicrous joke, and Mayall glared up at them to tell them they were wrong. For a few seconds that hall was the most uncomfortable place in the world. Mayall seemed close to tears. Then, after a few seconds more, he said that it was a joke after all. A joke. After all, it was only a joke. And *you* fell for it!

RIK MAYALL is the most fashionable, most original comic actor in the country. When he's on form, he's also by far the funniest. He was the biggest hit at The Comedy Store and The Comic Strip in London two years ago as a feeble feminist poet. He convinced millions that there actually was a nit-picking, ear-picking Brummie private investigator called Kevin Turvey who stood out as the unlikely highlight on the Beeb's *A Kick up the Eighties*. He impressed widely as a character actor in The Comic Strip Presents series on Channel 4 and he became a teenage hero as the lefty, anti-activist student in *The Young Ones*.

But having still not put a foot wrong, he now faces a sizeable and largely predictable professional and personal dilemma. He's well known; so much so that he can no longer pose credibly as Turvey or Rik the poet; he's under considerable pressure to finish filming the second *Comic Strip Presents* TV series while at the same time co-writing six new episodes of *The Young Ones* before production starts at the beginning of January; and he talks of having problems with his private 'persona'. He's wary of doing interviews, and he's very conscious of the imminent personal turmoil of the star/pressure/drink/drugs/lack of privacy syndrome. It hasn't yet reached uncontrollable proportions, but Mayall senses it's building.

He went up to the Edinburgh Festival in August to develop his live routine and "to work out a character that I can use until I'm 60 – to work on 'Rik Mayall'". His show at the fashionable Assembly Rooms, the most comfortable and best-run venue on the fringe circuit, was a sell-out virtually before it opened.

CHARACTER ACTOR ASSASSINATION



MAYALL

On the bill with Mayall were Ben Elton and Andy de la Tour, who, although preceding him in the running order, are far from warm-ups in the conventional sense. Both Elton (co-writer of *The Young Ones*, writer and performer in *Alfresco*, ex-Comedy Store compere) and de la Tour (hardened Belt and Braces campaigner from the West End cast of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, member of the original Alternative Cabaret circuit) are accomplished stand-ups in their own right.

It's significant that even Brian Wenham, Director of Programmes for BBC TV, had immense difficulty getting a ticket, such was the demand to see each of them do their bit. Says Mayall: "People have heard a lot about us but haven't seen that much, and certainly not that much live. I feel a certain pressure, that people are coming along with the view 'Okay, let's see how good you really are'"

Undoubtedly there's a marked difference in material; de la Tour has honest aggression edged with a sharp stab at common vices and tested political – Tory and Liberal – targets; Elton is the genial Jack-the-lad boozier with sound advice on how to keep your seat on a train and a routine that questions the need for that perennial sit-com favourite – the woman behind the bar with big tits.

Mayall is Mayall, or rather would like to be. Well over a year ago he said that he'd give Kevin Turvey the boot as he'd already outlived his purpose. But at the tail end of '83 Turvey is still perhaps his hottest property, and still a 15 minute opener for his 40 minute act. Mayall's just finished filming a new *Comic Strip* episode called *Eddie Monsoon (and his Talking Penis)* in which, he says, Turvey bows out for good. We'll see. He's a hard character to shake off.

"I think it would be dodgy to get known for just doing one thing," says Mayall. "I think you could succeed at it – I mean make money – but for a start I wouldn't like to be known as 'Oh, he's that comedian and he's only good at doing such and such...', anymore than I'd like to be known as 'Oh, he's that comedian...'. This is why I don't do many interviews either, because the more you give away, and the more of the skeleton and mechanics you show of what you're doing, then the less exciting it is for the audience, and then the less funny it is.

"Maybe that's one pull that I've got when I perform live – hopefully people will come along thinking 'I'm not quite sure what I'm going to see', and there's an element of danger there which is quite exciting.

"Tension is important. When you're telling a joke there has to be a moment of complete belief, of complete trust, between the performer and the audience. That moment of complete concentration is as satisfying as the laugh itself. You're in another world. If I tell a joke, for you to laugh really well at it you've got to completely forget about everything else and believe it's true, and then I get to the punchline and say 'No, it's not true'. But I'm only just exploring this area now.

PERFORMING live, Mayall has a peculiar habit/talent for both offending his audience by hurling unprovoked insults and conning them into believing characters or events which are completely untrue. There's a rumour circulating that he is becoming genuinely schizophrenic – cracking up under the pressure.

"Great. Great!! I'm not trying to make any serious points, but I've found myself in quite an interesting area over the last year or so. This is going to sound very pretentious, but we seem to be moving into an area of behaving very strangely towards each other – the idea of people being called 'stars' and 'famous', and of people who are then more important than other people – maybe it's

something that's just struck home to me. Maybe the plan is to talk about that, and to wreck that a bit.

"But it's a very fair criticism when someone says 'You're just abusing the audience, you're just pissing around'. I mean we were in Brighton – we did a terrible gig in Brighton, and if anyone in Brighton is reading this then I'm sorry about the gig! Me and Ade and Nigel [Planer, Neil the hippie in *The Young Ones*] weren't prepared at all for it, and people had come along expecting to see *The Young Ones*. It was okay, but it was going up and down and was a bit queasy. At the very end we did this gag, and as we went to go off, the very last thing I said was 'Goodnight...and oh, thanks for the money!' I thought it would be funny, but it was just dead quiet. You could hear our footsteps as we walked off!

"And that's a very interesting area – it's like going round to your granny's and getting your knob out. Something you just don't mention on stage is that relationship between the performer and the audience. It's funny, because you can go onstage and say 'fuck', and you can get your knob out like Ade did on *The Young Ones* tour – and it's very funny. But you don't say things like 'Thanks for giving us all this money' or 'I think you're wankers!' "

Some of the audience in Edinburgh seemed to take the abuse personally, as if Mayall really meant it. "That's perhaps because I haven't got used to that area yet where I can do it so that they know it's tongue-in-cheek. I don't think it's sufficient to be dangerous and create a lot of tension just for its own sake. You've got to undercut it – that's what a joke is. Once I'm more used to performing it, it'll be an easier show to watch – I'll be more in control of the situation."

IN DECEMBER Mayall takes a professional break from his normal work to appear in Brecht's *Man Equals Man* at Manchester University's Umbrella Theatre. Apart from his debut as a Wise King in his Droitwich school's nativity play, Mayall began his performing life as a drama student at Manchester. The original Twentieth Century Coyote was formed with Edmondson and three others, experimenting with improvised plays at a pub called The Band on the Wall until a bust-up after about a year. Mayall continued working with Edmondson on improvised half-hour shows.

Coyote came up to Edinburgh with two shows – the first in '77 when all five of them touted *My Lungs don't Work* – and then, with the depleted line-up, in a show called *Death on the Toilet*. Improbable or not, *Death on the Toilet* became one of the Fringe's cult hits – even now someone must be saying 'Of course, my dears, I saw Mr Mayall when he was in *DOTT...*'. The show brought in enough cash to enable Rik and Ade to move south.

"We used to tour two shows, just the two of us in Ade's car. We got one called *The Wart* together – a pisstake of Ken Campbell's [23-hour production] *The Warp*. It was a disaster. No one came to see us. We performed in little village halls, and we did about sixteen shows, but no more than ten people came to see us. We were putting them on at half-past five in the afternoon, with no posters or anything, and nobody would know about it." One of the audience one half-past five was Sunday Times drama critic, James Fenton. He called Mayall "a very talented young maniac".

Mayall's popular 'hopeless poet' act, so well honed at the Comedy Store, grew directly out of a character in *The Wart*. "I began doing those poems up in Edinburgh, because they had all these poems down at the Fringe Club, and I fancied pretending



Ben Elton

to be one. I began reading crap poems like they were doing. I did it and people laughed, and I shouted at them to shut up, and that's where it all came from.

"People thought there's an actual bloke making a twat of himself, and that's when it got really funny because they're giggling and trying to stop themselves, and you glare at them and they can't stop, and they start thinking 'Oh God, this is awful!' and they have a wonderful time.

"It's the same with Kevin Turvey. That's why I had my name removed from the credits when Kevin was on the telly. There are a lot of people who still think that he actually exists. Kevin's maybe outlived his life because now that *The Young Ones* has happened people think 'That bloke looks like him – oh, he's an actor'. But when it first happens it's wonderful.

"That's why what I'm doing now is me as Rik Mayall – that's the one card left up my sleeve. I can't pretend to be anyone else because my face is known, but I can still pretend to be me. I need to invent a character who is as good as Rik the poet or Kevin, but that I can call me. I need a character who I can stick with for life, because there's nowhere I can go after that.

"My act with Ade was always a crossover between acting and comedy. We've just done one of the *Comic Strip* films for the new series called *Dirty Movie* which I'm very pleased with because it's just exactly what we used to do in the early days. It's got a real absurdist feel to it. It's the first one hopefully of a huge crop – it looks odd and it looks good. It's just about a bloke who gets a dirty movie through the post and happens to own a cinema, and he's got to get everyone out so that he can watch it. Perhaps it's not yet quite absurdist enough for my taste..."



Rik Mayall

MAYALL'S personal tastes are kept in check, on *The Young Ones* at least, by his co-writers Lise Mayer (also his longstanding girlfriend) and Ben Elton. And if Mayall is more concerned with character, then perhaps Elton's writing interests lie as much or more with situation and (often implicitly political) content.

Says Elton: "I've become very worried that we're passing through a deeply reactionary phase in Britain – and it's far more of a reactionary phase than people realize. To a certain extent Andy and I both believe that periods of reaction produce good live entertainment – look at Germany in the Thirties – people get very angry."

"In a live act humour can be a very good way of getting your political concerns across – but I'm first and foremost a performer. My first principle is to be funny, because of course if you're not funny you actually do a disservice to your principles. If I *don't* get laughs it infuriates me, and I go for them and go for them and go for them. That means that a great deal of my act has nothing to do with politics – it's about beer, and coming from Guildford..."

How does it feel stepping out into a spotlight with 300 people in front of you all having paid their money and waiting either to be entertained or to heckle and pull you to the ground?

"Before the act I wander around backstage getting...not mentally nervous – but I have a terrific problem with my stomach. I seem to have no nerves anywhere but there – I just sort of feel sick and have to run to the bog. My mind is clear and my stomach's a raging turmoil, and I suppose it's at least better that way round. But I know that I can do it. Compering at The Comedy Store taught me that I can handle just about any audience – in fact I'm at my best if there's trouble."

"But once I'm onstage for a minute I feel good. I think the microphone is a terrific image – I like looking at them and I feel powerful – maybe there's something phallic in it. A bad gig affects me right



Andy de la Tour

up until the next one, and I spend the rest of the evening worrying about it and apologising to the people in the audience that I knew. But my definition of a bad gig is pretty strict – I mean I don't die onstage, but there are obviously gigs where people don't go 'Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!' at the end. But if it's a good gig I forget about it in about two minutes. A stormer might keep me going for two hours maximum."

Elton wrote his first play when he was 15 – "at that age I got obsessed with Noel Coward" – and developed by studying drama at Stratford (not the RSC...) and as a student in Manchester with Mayall and Edmondson. At 24 he's written a bottomless pile of comic plays, has written and performed in the dangerously over-hyped *Alfresco*, has compered deftly at The Comedy Store, has written a vehicle for Emma Thompson over which he's currently negotiating with Granada, and there are plans for a writing partnership with *Not the Nine O'clock News* and *Black Adder* writer Richard Curtis. He's also been jointly responsible for the TV series that's had more of a revolutionary impact on young people than any programme since Monty Python – *The Young Ones*.

MAYALL: "People write and say 'I think it's brilliant, I've got it on video and I watch it every night'. Everyone's videoed it, which I'm pleased about. We were writing it for a video because hopefully it's the kind of thing you can watch three or four times."

The BBC has recently announced plans to package its most popular shows in video format as a direct attempt to profit from declining audience figures. It's significant that *The Young Ones* is not amongst the first batch, and highlights rumours that the Beeb received a lot of hate-mail for the

series, in particular letters objecting to that old shocker – bad language.

Elton: "I didn't know about that. We got a lot of fan-mail. And I was very happy with the reaction to the Tampon scene ['What is it?...Oh, it's a telescope!...And it's got a mouse in it!'] because there was a lot of sympathy for that. I did a radio programme in which I talked about the puerile nature of censorship – the fact that we can have *The Two Ronnies* doing loads and loads of gags about how funny women's breasts are, but that we were almost not allowed to do a joke about a man not understanding what a Tampon was."

"That's about as obscene a bit of morality as you could possibly get. You can advertise toilet rolls, you can advertise people coughing and sneezing and taking Night Nurse, but you can't advertise menstruation in the same way. That assumes that menstruation must be rude. So what we're saying is that half the population have got something going on that's a bit secret and a bit naughty that we really can't talk about. Which is why girls of thirteen run home screaming because they don't know what's happening to them."

Certainly part of *The Young Ones* appeal lay in the examination of previously uncharted territory, at least on TV, and the fact that here, for the first time in ages, was a programme that young people could genuinely associate with. And young, according to Mayall, often meant very young.

"We did a *Young Ones* tour which was thrown together in about two weeks because we wanted to get back to doing live stuff again, and loads of little kids came to see us. It became clear the difficulties that families must have. I mean Ade comes on and gets his knob out, and I'm talking about really disgusting things – I'm *trying* to be filthy and horrible – but what kind of a family show is that? You can't bring your little kids down – they'd have nightmares after seeing me."

"But the parents come backstage afterwards and say 'It was wonderful, Rik!' And I say 'It was a bit dirty', and they go 'Oh no, don't worry about that. You liked it, Mark didn't you? And their kid would go 'Yes, lots of prick!' "

TOWARDS the end of the Festival stint, there's a party thrown to celebrate Lenny Henry's birthday. He's come up to Edinburgh and assembled the likes of Alexei Sayle and Andy de la Tour at Bannerman's wine bar for a definitely swinging time. Inside, Norman Lovett – the relatively unknown but highly-admired stand-up – pushes his way through the crowd, downs a pint, and starts discussing his career prospects with Andy de la Tour:

Lovett: "I've got twelve minutes on London Weekend TV soon, so it'll be interesting to see how that turns out. I really want to earn some more money as well. The last few years I've been really skint. I want to know when it'll be my turn. You know, when do I get some?"

"Last night I went to a party and Rik Mayall comes up to me, pissed out of his mind, and goes, 'You're funnier than I am! I've got all the TV, I've got more money, but I haven't got your material.' He came to see me twice last week because he can't write down my stuff fast enough!"

Andy de la Tour: "I'm putting him on the golf course so I can get all his good material. I can club him to death and get rid of him. And then take his gigs!"

Meanwhile, outside the sardine-packed wine bar, there's just somebody slumped on his own in a doorway opposite, looking dejectedly at the pavement. When it starts to rain, he lifts up his head and you realise that it's not just somebody at all. It's Rik Mayall.

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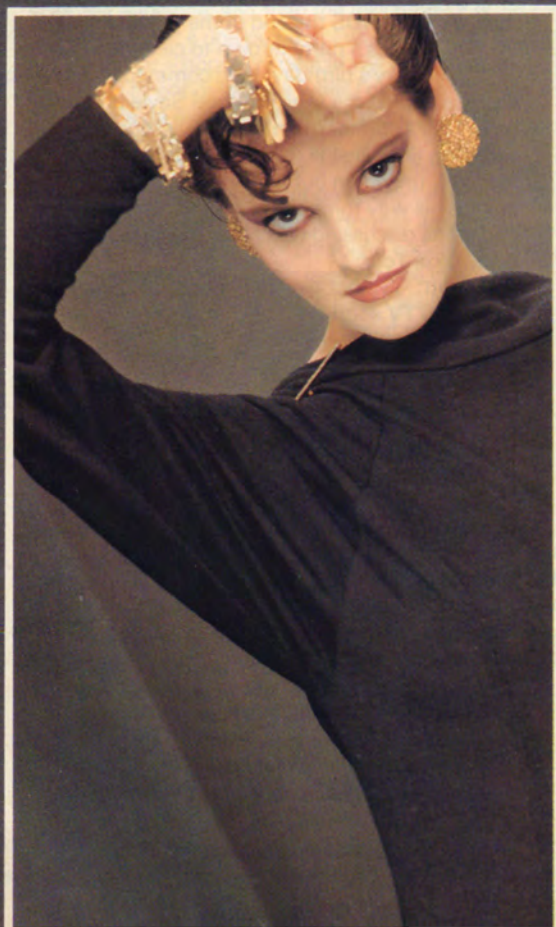
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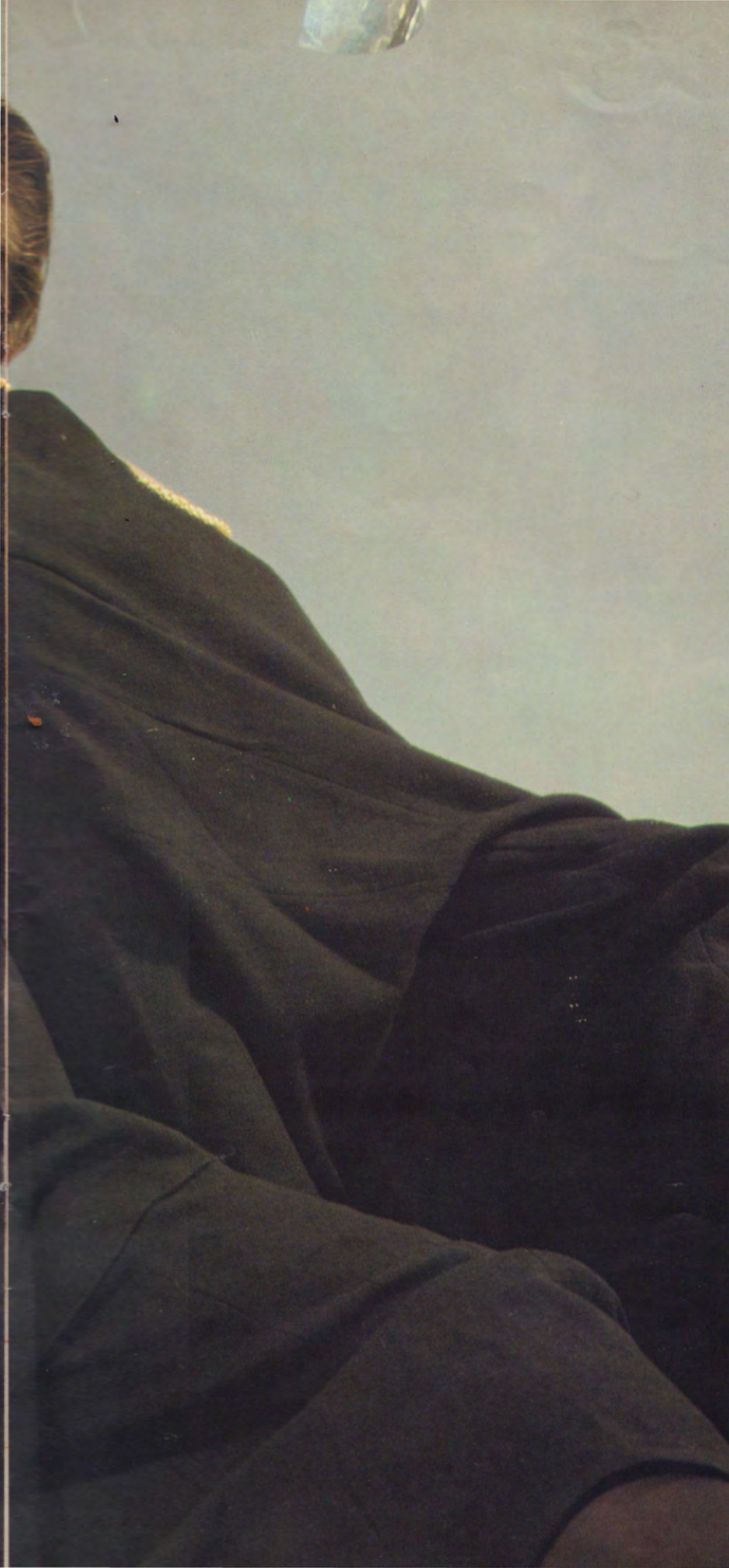
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MARILYN



Interview by Anton Rush
Photographs by Jamie Morgan

BOY GEORGE is the first successful androgyne pop star, as harmless as a 1980's Paul McCartney, and with a dazzling ability to turn his hand to a variety of musical styles and succeed in all of them with as much charm as talent. But now there is a contender to the title. Peter Robinson, better known as Marilyn, formerly a staunch London clubgoer who used to slink along next to Boy George in figure-hugging dresses and high heels, with bleached blonde hair and impeccable make-up, is about to become a pop star.

It's announced proudly at the Marilyn press office, which doubles as the Haysi Fantayzee HQ, that he is almost impossible to out-bitch. Apparently many have tried and perished. Marilyn is certainly not lacking in image. What he does perhaps lack is the charisma and star quality that have enabled George to make it big. It's hard at this early stage to say how Marilyn will sound on plastic, but he says that his music is based on American Gospel and sounds like nothing else. Jeffrey Daniel from Shalamar feels that Marilyn has the best soul voice in England and wants to work with him. And Phonogram have, reportedly, paid out a large amount of money in order to get him on the label.

Relaxing in a huge armchair the man himself settles down to give me his version of what's been happening...

You've only just returned from a two year stay in Los Angeles. What were you doing there?

Well, I was doing a fashion show in Tokyo, and my hair was really long. I was pissed off with the Marilyn thing by then, so one of the models told me to cut all my hair off, and I did as soon as I got back to England. It really depressed me because I thought everyone would take me seriously, and they didn't. So I went to Los Angeles to get it out of my system, and I stayed until my hair grew back.

The hair is real, is it?

Yes, my hair is real.

So it's not done at Antenna?

I don't know where you mean.

You must do, it's very fashionable.

I'm not into fashion...

(Later I was told that Marilyn's locks are in fact real hair, but not Marilyn's real hair. He does get his hair done at Antenna, but has now replaced Simon Forbes' temporary glue-in technique with something more permanent: superglue.)

What are the influences behind your songs? I've heard that you love Barbra Streisand and Gospel.

I love Gospel. I think it's fab. And I love Barbra Streisand – she's the best singer in the universe. I met her in Los Angeles in the street and she was completely freaked out by me. I'd love to do a duet with her.

Why was she freaked out?

That's the kind of person she is. She hates to be hassled. She probably thought that I was a fan or something.

What did you say to her?

I said, 'Babs, I think you're wonderful, and I think that your music is absolutely terrific', and she said, (adopts Jewish American accent) 'Oh thank you so much', and then she walked away.

You also worked for a gospel preacher in America didn't you?

Yeah, the Reverend James Cleveland. He's the biggest Gospel star.

What did you do with him?

I was working on his album. Well actually I was working for somebody who was working on his album. I was somebody's personal assistant. But I used to see a lot of him, go to his church meetings and all the rest – generally hang out.

What were the meetings like?

Oh fabulous. I'm into everybody being themselves and doing what they feel like doing, and in those kinds of places they do that – screaming, shouting and dancing. As long as they don't infringe on anybody's personal space, I think it's fab.

Are you religious?

Only in my morals. I don't associate myself with any movement like Christianity or Judaism.

What do you mean by only in your morals?

There are certain things that are right for me, but I wouldn't impose them on anyone else. I've concocted my own code of ethics and that's what I stick to.

Can you be more specific than that?

Well, I don't believe in sleeping with lots of people. If I'm going out with one person, then that's the person I'm going out with.

Do you go out with men or women?

Men!

Was that an obvious question to ask?

I go out with everyone. I don't categorise people into men and women. If I like someone that's a guy, and I go out to dinner, then that's fine, great. But it doesn't mean I'm going to sleep with him at the end of the day. And when I meet somebody, I don't look between their legs to see if they've got a penis or a fanny. It's just whether I like the person. I think that there's too much emphasis these days on people as sexual objects.

Are you worried by things like AIDS?

Why should I be? I think it's all got out of hand. People are panicking over nothing. It's like cancer. More people die of cancer than from AIDS, and nobody's screaming and shouting and wearing gasmasks for cancer. There's millions of different things that are just as frightening. I mean, AIDS is frightening of course, but there are other things as well.

Did you find that people were really scared about it in the States?

I wasn't there when the panic started – if there was one. It's probably some Russian that invented AIDS. They've probably got the cure already. I'm sure someone told me about Herpes the other day, that they invented the cure first, and then the disease.

Who is they?

It could be anyone, couldn't it? Big drug companies perhaps. They'll sell the cure for millions of pounds when it's all reached epidemic proportions.

Apparently the Russians are thought to have invented an incurable strain of Syphilis called Hanoi Rose which they released in Vietnam.

I hope it smells sweet. I wouldn't fancy getting a whiff of that particular rose, would you? I'm sorry, but I'm not very well up on diseases.

Let's change the subject, shall we? You were born in Jamaica?

Yeah, I was spunked up against a wall, and the sun hatched me out.

Tell me the story seriously.

I was found on a banana boat.

Oh come on. Try to be serious.

OK, my father met my mother in Maida Vale, and then they fell in love. Before they fell in love, my father had made arrangements to go to Jamaica on a banana boat, and my mother decided to go and meet him there, and they got married and had me. My father was working as a salesman there. I lived there for four years, and then they split up and my mother brought me back to England, to Wolverhampton, where I lived with my grandmother for a few years, and then I moved down to Hertfordshire to live with my other grandmother.

What was Wolverhampton like?

I loved it. I loved every minute of it. They are the happiest childhood memories that I've got.

What are the worst?

People used to victimise me. I saw in magazines all those pictures of people with bleached blonde hair, so I bleached mine. I was only thirteen at the time, and the other kids at school used to call me a queer. I didn't know what the hell queer meant at that time. I suppose it all got a bit out of hand. The more they called me queer, the more I used to dress up. It was a never-ending battle, so I left.

What did you do when you first came to London?

I left school when I was fifteen and I took sleeping pills for a whole year, day and night. I was frightened to go out. Then a friend of mine said he was going to take me to a nightclub, and we went



◆ MARILYN



a few times a week, and I met lots of people that you know now.

When did the dreadlocks appear?

About eight or nine months ago.

Who had dreadlocks first? Boy George or Marilyn?

I don't really care. I think that's a load of crap. Who cares? It's like asking who sang *Memories* first, Streisand or Neil Sedaka? Nobody gives a shit really, do they? You are who you are...

The individualism you were talking about coming out in the Gospel meetings, do you think that there's a relationship between that and the individualism of the days of Blitz, Billy's and Hell?

I don't know. I feel that people always want to express themselves. One person starts doing it and then everybody follows. When people see a shining example of individuality, then they want to do it themselves. So I think that your remark about dreadlocks is basically crap. You can come down to the Palace tonight and see thirty people with dreadlocks but they all look different. It's like saying that all black people look the same, it's just stupidity.

I didn't say that they all look the same. Anyway, don't you think that your comments about individualism are just an old cliché? People were saying that in the '50s, and kids have been successfully expressing themselves ever since then.

In fits and starts, yes. The sad thing is that when people express themselves like that it gets called a movement, and then it gets classified and put away in a drawer somewhere, and that's as far as people can see, because the people that aren't expressing themselves can't understand the ones who are, so they put them into categories.

Didn't you get categorised as a New Romantic?

No I never have been funnily enough. I wasn't New and I certainly wasn't Romantic. That was just the Press again putting a label on a few people who dressed up.

I thought that people like Steve Strange actually rode the crest of that wave quite successfully.

Steve who?

Steve Strange.

Never heard of him.

A lot of people have remarked that you have a good soul voice.

For me, Soul is when you believe in what you're singing, whatever it happens to be. Folk songs are Soul songs, Country & Western is Soul. It's all categories again, isn't it?

How do you feel about performing in front of people? You haven't done that yet have you?

I'm very nervous, but then I wouldn't be human if I wasn't nervous about it. I'm not so sure of myself that I'll get up on a stage in front of thirty thousand people and be fab.

Having signed a record contract, are you going to be rich?

Being rich to me doesn't mean having pots of money. It means being a happy person, and money doesn't make you happy. Having a Rolls Royce doesn't mean anything to me.

So you're not in this for the money?

Of course not. That's not the way to approach it. Some people do and they fail. If you've got that attitude, then you're not meant for the music business.

Do you think that people will always expect you to be Marilyn?

Of course not! Well, I don't think so anyway. Well, I am Marilyn, aren't I? That's my name, but I'm not Marilyn Monroe – that was just an act I pulled off.

Do you think you're a sexy person?

I don't know. That's not for me to decide really. I don't make love with myself, so I can't tell you.

Woody Allen said that sex with yourself is sex with someone you love.

And look at Woody Allen. What does he know about sex?

How do people react to you generally?

They're freaked out. They think that I look brilliant but they're freaked out all the same.

Even people you wouldn't expect to be freaked out?

Mmm. I think they say, 'Oh! That's Marilyn – she looks great tonight.' 'She'! I didn't used to analyse it all. Thank god that people liked it.

You've just been to Egypt with Boy George, haven't you?

No, that's really strange. Someone else told me that. It wasn't me, it must have been someone that looks like me.

There aren't that many around!

I think they were cardboard cut-outs at the airport.

Can you remember the first time anyone saw you as Marilyn?

No, I can't honestly. But I can remember that when I used to walk into a club, the conversation stopped completely.

What happens now?

People come up and ask me for my autograph.

What do you think about the club scene now compared to what it used to be?

It's exactly the same as it was. It's a bit older.

There must be some differences.

Yeah. It was more exciting then than it is now. There's much more security now. Whereas then you didn't know where your next crust of bread was coming from, so it was always very exciting to go to all the free parties and get lots of free booze and food, even though you weren't invited.

The kind of security you're talking about is money?

Kind of. Most people now have more money than I had at that time. I mean, I couldn't even afford to go to the Wimpy Bar. I used to live on one Wimpy every two days. I couldn't afford anything else.

Do you think that you've missed out on anything by being away so long? I believe you said that Boy George is a millionaire and that you'd like to be one too.

I didn't actually say that. You know what journalists are like: everything gets blown up out of proportion.

Are you frightened of that happening to you?

I'm not frightened of anything. I don't care.

Being scared is the downfall of most people. Some things are very frightening, but you shouldn't be generally frightened. You shouldn't be frightened to get up and do what you have to because of something that happened to somebody else.

So you've secretly wanted to make a career out of music for a long time?

Yes, I suppose so. But I don't regard myself as a musician, funnily enough. I mean, I don't play any musical instrument apart from the organ...

That's not in your biography.

The sexual organ.

I fell right into that trap, didn't I?

No, I think of myself primarily as a singer. A lot of people have asked me to do it for a long time. 'Marilyn, you must make a record!' And I've always said, 'Yeah, yeah, next week.'

Why were they asking you and not somebody else?

Dunno. Maybe they think I'm a fantastically interesting person. ◇

THE BLITZ READERSHIP SURVEY

1983/4.

This readership survey is to find out more about you and what you think of BLITZ. It will help us to give you more of what you want so that we can produce an even better magazine for you. Please answer all the relevant questions by ticking the appropriate boxes. We do not need names and addresses, so answers will be in the strictest confidence. Postage is free, just fold up the back of the page and pop it in the letter box; please return all forms by 1st. February 1984. Thank you for your help.

1. How you first saw BLITZ.

1a. "Do you buy BLITZ . . .?"

- ☐ Every issue.
☐ From time to time.
☐ Only when there is something specific in it that you want to read.

1b. "Are you a subscriber . . .?"

- ☐ Yes. ☐ No.

1c. "How many issues of BLITZ have you bought?"

- ☐ One.
☐ 2-4.
☐ 5-8.
☐ More than 8.

1d. "How many issues, if any, have you looked at but not actually bought (eg. at a friend's, in a library etc.)?"

- ☐ None. ☐ 1-2.
☐ 3-4. ☐ 5-6.
☐ 7 or more.

1e. "How many other people, on average, see your copy of BLITZ?"

- ☐ 1-2.
☐ 3-4.
☐ 5-6.
☐ More than 6.

1f. "Did you have difficulty finding this issue of BLITZ?"

- ☐ No.
☐ Yes. I looked in . . .

(Please specify town, area and newsagent if possible.)

2. About you

2a. "Are you . . .?"

- ☐ Male. ☐ Female.

2b. "What age are you?"

- ☐ Under 18. ☐ 18-24.
☐ 25-35. ☐ Over 35.

2c. "Are you . . .?"

- ☐ Single. ☐ Married.

2d. "Are you at the moment . . .?"

- ☐ Employed.
☐ Unemployed.
☐ Still at school/college/university.

2e. "Which of the following qualifications do you have?"

- ☐ CSE's/O-Levels.
☐ A-Levels.
☐ Degree.

2f. "If you are employed, please state your field of work."

2g. "Which of the following comes nearer to your annual income?"

- ☐ Under £4,000.
☐ £4,000-£6,000.
☐ £6,000-£8,000.
☐ Over £8,000.

2h. "Is where you live at the moment . . .?"

- ☐ Your parents' home.
☐ Your own house/flat.
☐ Rented accommodation.
☐ College/school accommodation.

2i. "Where do you live?"

Town _____

County _____

(If you live in London, please give the postcode.)

3. What you do and what you buy.

3a. "Which magazines do you buy/read reasonably regularly?"

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ City Limits | ☐ Over 21 |
| ☐ Cosmopolitan | ☐ Private Eye |
| ☐ Creative Review | ☐ Punch |
| ☐ The Face | ☐ Record Mirror |
| ☐ Harpers & Queen | ☐ Ritz |
| ☐ Hot Shoe | ☐ Smash Hits |
| ☐ I-D | ☐ Sounds |
| ☐ Interview | ☐ Tatler |
| ☐ Melody Maker | ☐ Time Out |
| ☐ NME | ☐ Vogue |
| ☐ No. 1 | ☐ Zoom |
| ☐ Other (please specify) | |

3b. "Which of the following newspapers do you buy/read reasonably regularly?"

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ Daily Express | ☐ Guardian |
| ☐ Daily Mail | ☐ The Sun |
| ☐ Daily Mirror | ☐ The Times |
| ☐ Daily Telegraph | ☐ Local paper |
| ☐ Financial Times | ☐ None |

3c. "Do you possess any of the following?"

- ☐ A tape/cassette recorder
☐ A record player
☐ A television
☐ A video recorder
☐ A new car
☐ A secondhand car
☐ A new motorbike/moped
☐ A secondhand motorbike/moped
☐ An SLR Camera
☐ A bank account
☐ A credit card

3d. "How often do you go to any of the following?"

- | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Gig | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Cinema | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Club/Disco | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Pub/Bar | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| Theatre | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| | Once a week | Once a month | Less often | Never |

4. About BLITZ.

4a. "Do you only read articles in BLITZ on subjects that already interest you?"

- ☐ Yes.
☐ No.

4b. "If not, how often does BLITZ generate interest in subjects that usually hold no interest for you?"

- ☐ Frequently.
☐ Occasionally.
☐ Rarely.

4c. "What is the main reason you buy BLITZ?" (please specify).

4d. "Would you like to see more or less in BLITZ of any of the following?"

- ☐ ☐ Music.
☐ ☐ Fashion.
☐ ☐ Design.
☐ ☐ People.
☐ ☐ Video.
☐ ☐ Film.
☐ ☐ Photography.
☐ ☐ Theatre.
☐ ☐ Books.
☐ ☐ Art.

More
Less

4e. "Have you ever gone to, or bought any of the following as a result of reading about them in BLITZ?"

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ☐ Record. | ☐ Book. |
| ☐ Clothes. | ☐ Exhibition. |
| ☐ Film. | ☐ Play. |
| ☐ Video. | ☐ Gig. |

4f. "Are there any improvements or changes you would like to see in BLITZ?"

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FOLD 3

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■ FOUR/SUMMER 1981

Readers of the Lost Ark; Andy Summers Interview; Haircut 100; Gilbert & George; James Cameron.

■ FIVE/WINTER 1982

Marianne Faithfull; Stephen Linard & Fiona Dooly; Rock Press; Belle Stars; Patrick Caulfield.

■ SIX/SPRING 1982

Flanner Thompson Interview; Fashion - Nick Hayward; Kim Wilde; Mick Karn; Belle Stars; Runny; Ugly George; Bill Forsyth.



■ NINE/JAN-FEB 1983

Paul Weller & Tony Marchant; Russ Meyer; Angus McBean & Surreal Photography; Evil Dead; Warhol's films; Brookside; Stephen Linard; Pride; Cristina.



■ TEN/APRIL 1983

Tim Page - Vietnam Photography; Return of the Jedi; Alternative Interiors; Comic Strip - French & Saunders; Paul Morley; Everything but the Girl; Frank Zappa; Bic Owen; Night Style.



■ ELEVEN/MAY 1983

Julian Cope; Attack on British Advertising; Dennis Hopper; Bowie Hunger; Fashion - Twenties; Videomakers; Peter Shelley; Golden Turkey; Martin Sheen.



■ TWELVE/JUNE 1983

Art School Special - designers, artists; Ken Russell Interview; Derek Jarman; Howard Devoto; Flip Clothing; Adrian Lines - Holography; Rare Bowie Sleeve; Set Designers.



■ THIRTEEN/JULY-AUG 1983

Record Sleeve Designers; Yello; Rick Baker Special Effects; Fashion - Kate Garner; Tony Wilson; Paul Haig; Jack Kerouac & Joyce Johnson; Dario Argento.



■ FOURTEEN/SEPT 1983

Ian Dury, Peter Blake, Humphrey Ocean; Clive James on Bad Taste; Clare Grogan Interview; Thunderbirds Revisited/Terrahawks; Don McCullin; Carmel; Animal Nightlife; Set the Tone.



■ FIFTEEN/OCT 1983

Paul Morley meets Wham!; David Sylvian Interview; Edward Bell; Gary Crowley; Michael Zilkha; Jeremy Thomas; Paul Weller & Vaughn Toulouse; Jonathan Pryce; Stray Cats.

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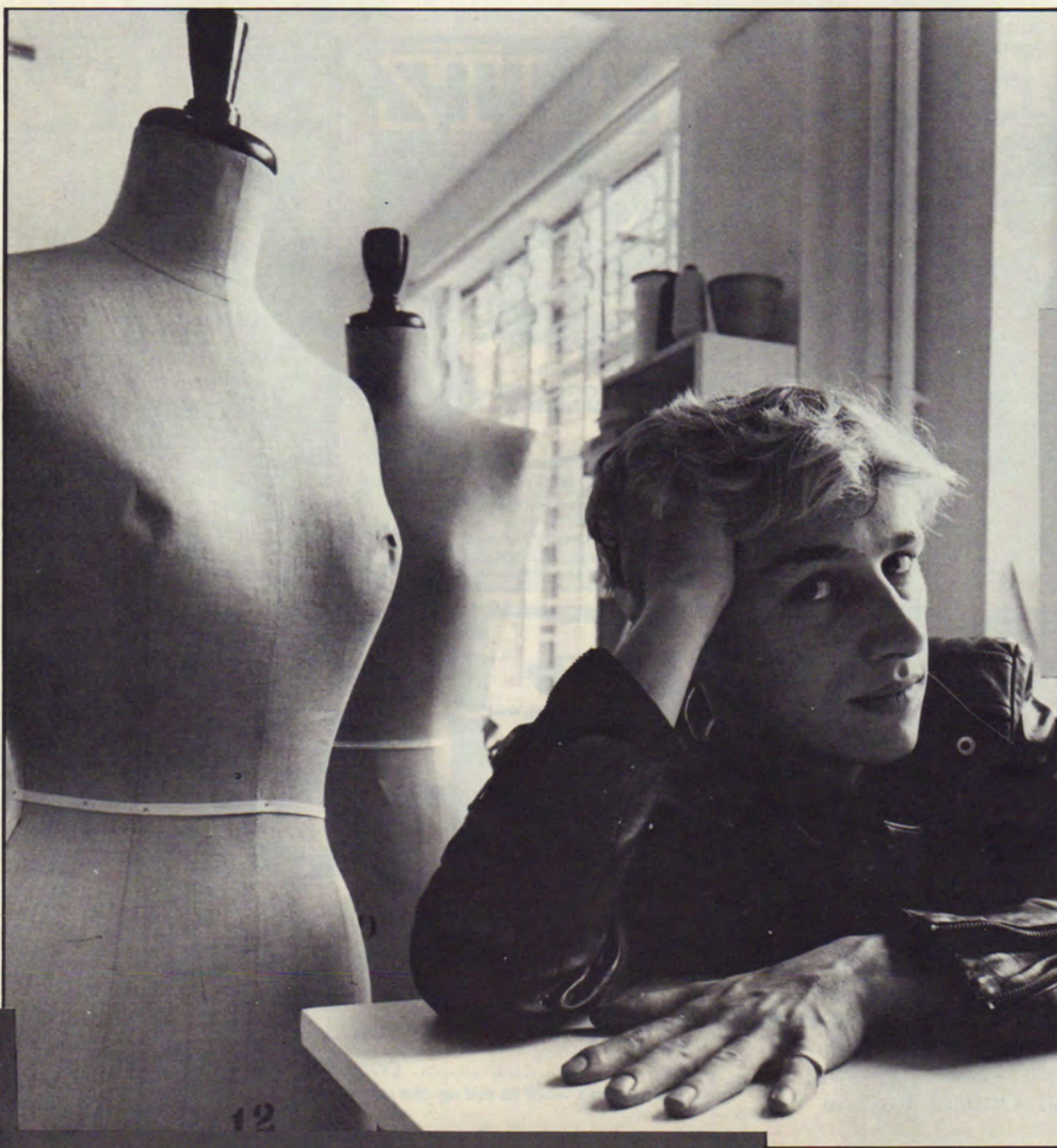
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PEOPLE

◆ Words by Iain R. Webb
◆ Photographs by Richard Croft

I ONCE SAW a film in which Joan Crawford fell in love with a violin virtuoso. The man had no time for her, and her only answer was to turn to the bottle. Following a bar room 'scene', one of the more enlightened lushes notes almost too readily, "A French Philosopher once listed three hundred ways of committing suicide, only he forgot one – never fall in love with an Artist!". Indeed, worthy of a philosopher, but I suspect the gent had never been involved in the delightful world of Fashion, or he would have retracted, or at the very least reassessed, his statement . . .

If you succeed in the world of 'victims' and 'contracts' you deserve everything you get . . . during Fashion Week I decided to talk to three survivors to try and understand just what's what in Fashion . . .



JASPER CONRAN

LAST SEASON there was one accessory which stood out during Fashion Week. It wasn't those pearls, or the Chanel chains. It wasn't even the Ray-Ban sunglasses which almost every show featured. No, only one model knew where it was at, and only one designer, Jasper Conran, who got it just right when he pushed Claire Atkinson onto the catwalk carrying a brown paper bag. Brown Paper Bag chic has long since vanished, but as any International shopper will know, it was best exemplified by Jimmy Dean in *Rebel Without A Cause* (Dean carried his favourite sandwiches to school in it).

Accessorising is something which Jasper feels is terribly important. "This latest collection is my most dressed. Before I didn't have the courage, but I've been inspired because after the last show I realised that it does work."

His designs are invariably uncluttered; did he think they reflected the lifestyle of the women who bought them? "I don't believe anyone's life is uncluttered. But I'm not designing for any one specific person."

What kind of look then could his potential client expect? "My taste is for clothes which do not shout at you. I don't want to be too pushy. If you stamp your look on something it can be a dangerous thing; I'd like to think my designs can take on the personality of the person who is wearing them. After all, a shirt is a shirt is a shirt."

Far from being a languid artisan, Jasper's head is fixed firmly on his business. "All my work is influenced by business, because I want to stay doing it: it's my career. I'm a separates designer, and I have to think about my market: I don't believe in frightening people off, and making that market too narrow."

For this reason his clothes are some of the simplest you are likely to see on any European catwalk. Before interviewing Jasper, I talked to a few associates about him. One picked up on this feature of his work, stating that, "His clothes are so simple, I don't know why he bothers designing them". A little unfair I thought,





MIKEL ROSEN

LONDON ART School trained. Fashion design in Italy and London. Illustrated in London. Now, Senior lecturer at Middlesex Polytechnic in Fashion/Textiles. Building course led into idea of forming a production company as opposed to design company. This is Mikel Rosen talking about Mikel Rosen Productions...

"Fashion week generally means a challenge for me on two levels," says Mikel. Firstly, he aims to try and give British fashion the same exposure and success normally related to the French and Italians, and secondly, to "see which side of the business I'll be working on by the time the next season comes around, and how I can use past experiences as vehicles for new ideas, inspirations, and motivations".

The show he produced for last year's final year students at Middlesex Poly was triumphant. Bringing the summer graduation show forward to March, and placing it amongst showings by Zandra Rhodes, Bruce Oldfield, and the likes, he allowed the students to show their concepts alongside the professionals. The show was in fact broadcast on TV (*South of Watford*), and gave the students necessary publicity before they had even left college...

Mikel has strong views on fashion education. "It's still not done correctly,

even with work experience, whereby a student goes out into industry for six months or so. That should be brought into college, and the students should be trained to talk money. They may leave with good experience, backed up by an excellent folio, but it's still difficult to walk into someone's office and explain why that collection will require X amount of money."

Talking cash. Would Government backing help the fashion industry, as it does in France and Italy? "I think it's the British mentality, but even if there was money, and it was all dealt with by one body, it still wouldn't work that well." A good example, Mikel explained, was this year's new arrival at London Fashion Week, The Tent, which, emulating the Parisians, will house the majority of the fashion shows this season. "Although there is one roof for all the shows, still the designers find it difficult to share models. It would be better for them to worry about the clothes a little more, and less about the exclusivity of this model or that..."

The show production which Mikel offers his clients is a co-ordination of music, lighting effects and so on, to complement each designer's look, and separate it from the rest. Wise as they come, this season Mikel has caught up hip DJ Gary Crowley in the frenzy. "I've got Maxfield Parrish's younger market clothes with Gospel music; and Caroline Charles classics to Rap Dub..."

Did the incongruity of such presentation have any effect? "It makes the clothes seem larger than life, and exaggerates a look. It's a form of theatre; if a designer is looking for somewhere to go, I'll direct them."

And in what direction would he like to see shows go, or was it necessary for them to remain on a catwalk, with models hustling by?

"After her Roundhouse and Pillar Hall shows, why is Zandra Rhodes still there if she is meant to be a leading fashion innovator? A show should now utilise film, video and performance. I'm surprised Vivienne Westwood has stuck to the catwalk format. Her shows caused a phenomenon, but only because they were not fully rehearsed. That was the first time that it had been done in Britain."

Even so, after seven and a half years, Mikel now feels that maybe he should begin to go further into one area on a slightly more "full time" level. "It would be nice if things were a little easier, and a little less stress..."

MIKEL ROSEN predictions:

"Throughout 1984 there will be an emergence of what has been building up over the past two years. A new breed of designer, make-up artist, journalist, stylist, etc., who will work together unlike today's established designers who will be usurped..."



RACHEL AUBURN

"FROM RAGS To Riches" the headlines screamed when Rachel Auburn presented her dishevelled designs to New Yorkers. Of course, Americans being Americans (as my father always says), they lapped it up, and still wanted more. When she returned to Britain so too did the fashion press. "From Rags To Riches" they giggled, but, at which stage was Rachel now?

"I still go out picking up rags, and tramps' clothes off the streets at the end of the day, which I eventually sell, in some form, to department stores in New York,

such as Bloomingdales."

Although I heartily applaud Rachel's sense of humour, in the States there are those who take exception to this. "Recently there have been demonstrations outside Bloomingdales. The poor citizens of New York protested about my rag jumpers and Richard Torry's jackets selling for hundreds of dollars...it was broadcast on A.T.V. all across the country. I'm very good at making rich women look like dirty old gypsies."

Although her style is a strong one, Rachel maintains that it changes from day to day, and is always made up of a mixed

bag. How did she find people reacted to her wild, unruly looks? "In New York people thought I was a freak...but I like to look freaky...I like having an effect on people to kick them out of their complacency". Rachel deliberately aims to provoke people to make them think, but sometimes their conditioning can be a problem. "It's difficult for me to get trade if I dress up how I want. Not many straight boys approach me unless I dress down, and wear make-up in a different way."

With such media attention, have people's attitude towards her changed? "People treat me differently. More people come up to me, which I like: lots of young boys and girls latch onto me and come round to the studio..."

Her desire to dress up started at an early age when she used to go to jumble sales. "I'd buy as many dressing-up clothes as I possibly could, and wear them all out."

Showy is something Rachel most definitely is: another in a long line of English eccentrics. "Live bodies always have the most impact. I have more effect walking around the Tate Gallery than any of the paintings hanging there," she says.

Brooke Shields has even been pictured wearing a Rachel Auburn dress in *Interview* magazine, and the printed pictures hang askew above Rachel's stall in Kensington Market. Was there anyone else who Rachel would like to see wearing her designs? "Malcolm McLaren, Michael Jackson, Todd Irvin ("a hunky model", Rachel informed me), and Richard Gere". All men.

Would she like one of these gents to accompany her on a glamorous late night date? "No, I go to bed every night at nine o'clock," she replied. I think for the first time during our conversation Rachel was not being totally honest, but after all, images are only there to be played around with. If you don't believe me, ask Rachel for yourself.

RACHEL AUBURN predictions:

"Everything is going to be glamorous and glittery - especially glittery. And Glam rock will be big...lots more Marc Bolan...Yeah!"

but I decided on what-the-heck tactics, and put this statement to Jasper. "Whoever said that," he mused, "has obviously never tried to design something simple. It takes courage to pare a thing down. You could say the same thing of Eileen Grey and her lacquer screens - not that I would ever compare myself..."

Humility was the one characteristic I had not expected from the son of Terence, and Supermother Shirley, but there it was...and I'd only scratched at the surface. "Everyone's entitled to their opinion...all well and good."

With females like Paula Yates constantly donning his dresses, was there anyone else he would like to dress? "I loathe the idea of dressing anyone. As soon as I have designed the collection, and presented it, my side of the work is done. I don't understand people who always have to dress in designer labels, or wear one specific designer all the time." This he thought was due to a feeling of insecurity, or perhaps a lack of time. However, he felt no such insecurity himself when I asked him if he was really the nightclubbing socialite most people either suspect or expect him to be? "I don't nightclub, because I don't have the energy...more and more I feel sillier dressing up. I care much less now about my appearance than I did as a child." But, he did agree that, once again, it was good for the business for him to be seen out, "but if your clothes are strong enough you don't need to do that."

Did he enjoy showing? "I think I do. Every collection is painful, but I would hate not to do one. It's a reward for me for people to see it and I'm very lucky because I can do more or less whatever I want. But I believe in building up slowly and surely: you don't just become St. Laurent overnight!"

Or even Jasper Conran.

JASPER CONRAN predictions:

"You never know what's around the corner...I don't like the idea of predictions, in case it doesn't happen...then you look like such an idiot!"



AN AVERAGE GUY

◆ Interview by Johnny Black
◆ Photograph by Steve Shipman

"VISITED a friend in Northumberland last week and she had a gravel drive," explains Brian Eno, "It was the most interesting gravel I've ever seen. She probably thought I was mad, because I spent all my time raking through her gravel, but I found about forty carnelians, some citrines and some rock crystal. Very beautiful."

Fresh from lunch in The City with a friend, a commodities broker, Brian Eno breezes into the offices of EG Records, settles into a high-backed executive swivel chair, and starts delving into a voluminous white plastic bag. He draws out a small package, carefully unwraps it and reveals a thick paperback, *The Encyclopaedia of Rocks and Minerals*. "This is such a great book," he enthuses, "I'm fascinated by rocks. I seem to have a knack for finding them, because I always walk around with my head down."

When he's not staring at the ground, he's staring at the sky: the trip to Northumberland provided other delights: "We lay on our backs after midnight on August 12, which is the best night of the year for meteorites, and we counted 35 in ten minutes. Her farm is in the middle of the moors, and it was pitch dark, under perfectly clear skies, not a street light for miles. We must have seen hundreds."

"He was always looking for something different . . ."
—Mrs. Eno (his mum).

ENO ISN'T quite like you and me. He will sometimes drop the word 'humans' into his conversation much the way we might use the word 'Martians', with an alien curiosity and a feeling of distance between.

The height of his popular acclaim was during the early seventies when, with long flowing golden locks, excessive make up and clothes which were a parody of futuristic glitter styles, he completely stole the show from Bryan Ferry during two years as Roxy Music's keyboard captain. It was a time that he hated. He loathed touring, he didn't get along well with Ferry and he was unhappy with the restrictions of traditional rock music.

Quitting Roxy in 1973, he nevertheless stuck in the rock song groove on his early solo albums, although he was steadily progressing towards something much less conventional. A collapsed lung in 1974 and being hit by a car in 1975 granted him two extended periods of enforced relaxation and solitude, during which he began to formulate ideas about his musical direction which were ultimately to plunge his career into the backwaters of cognoscenti cult obscurity. Simultaneously, however, they brought him such

accolades as 'the father of modern electronic rock bands', and his name began to crop up as an influence in the work of everyone from David Bowie to New York No Wave bands like Teenage Jesus And The Jerks.

Today, he divides his time between travelling, writing and recording music, devising multi-screen ambient video installations and pursuing a number of related interests. His name is better known in the galleries and art centres of the world, from Tokyo to New York, Sydney to Naples, than it is in the boardrooms of most record companies.

"He spent three days twirling hoses to see what they'd sound like, and another day he had us all playing with gravel in little boxes."

—Disenchanted studio musician.

"MY EARLIEST experiences of music were a funny mixture. My grandfather lived in an old chapel and I lived with him until I was about seven. He was a postman, but he spent all his time repairing these marvellous mechanical musical instruments, things with little men who came out and bashed cymbals, and others that had artificial waterfalls built into them. I was surrounded by these things, and he would put a penny in and all this strange music would come cascading out.

"My father too, was a postman, in Woodbridge, in Suffolk. I would always hear him walking around the house whistling and beating time. I once went to the Post Office late one night when he was on night duty and I heard him and three of his friends who had formed a whistling quartet. They did *Anchors Aweigh* in four part harmony whistling, with my dad beating time on those wire mesh racks they use for sorting letters.

"You know . . . I have a friend in New York, Bob Quine, who is very good at finding really old records. I recently asked him to find Ketty Lester singing *Love Letters Straight From Your Heart* and to put it in the middle of a blank tape for me, so I wouldn't know when it would come on. I have a soundproof room in my apartment in New York, and I went in there, turned out the lights and put on the tape.

"While I was waiting for it to start, which took about fifteen minutes, I tried to remember the exact moment when I first heard the song. There's a long river in Woodbridge, and beside it there's a bandstand. We used to all gather there with our transistors and listen to Alan Freeman's *Pick Of The Pops* on Sunday afternoons. One afternoon, just as the evening light was beginning to change, I heard that song, *Love Letters*, and I was so moved by it.

It was such a huge experience for me. So I sat in my room and when the song came on again, it all just flooded back.

"I can be moved to tears quite easily by music, particularly Gospel songs, which is what I listen to most of all lately."

"ENO IS GOD" —Graffiti in New York Subways.

AS WE talked, it suddenly struck me that the words and phrases Eno has used in the past to describe his evocative, ethereal music, seem just as much to be descriptions of the man himself. He once spoke of his music as having "an ambiguous mood of something denied", and another time of "an Arcadian kind of yearning", but the yearning is as much in Eno as in his music.

Since the release of *Before And After Science*, in 1977, Eno has virtually abandoned the formats of the rock song. All of his solo albums and collaborations with other artists have taken the form of avant garde electronic experiments but, it seems, he has quietly been writing songs throughout this later period, which are never released. He estimates that something over 20 songs exist, more than enough to fill an album, except that he has no intention of so doing.

"I've been working for ages on one song, called *On That Golden Day*. It's about someone remembering a day in his life when he was on a boat, becalmed in a lonely bay, miles from anywhere. On that day, he kept wishing the wind would come so he could move on, but now, as he remembers it, he realises it was the most perfect day of his life, but he wasted it, missed it because he was so anxious to be going somewhere else."

Exactly that sense of yearning for something lost seems to hover around him as he talks. Is the man in the boat Eno? "Well, it is something I notice myself doing quite a lot. If a song is going to convince you, then it must relate to a feeling that is always recurring. In my case, it is a feeling of being melancholy, but enjoying it."

Eno notices a long strand of black thread which has unravelled itself from the arm of his shirt. He takes a cigarette lighter and sets flame to the end of it, clearly enjoying the sight of the tiny fire burning up towards his arm. "Songs are rather like love affairs. I feel that I'm married to my ambient music, but sometimes in the studio, I'll spend an hour or two having a fling with an attractive, glamorous song.

"If I could learn how to incorporate the things I've learned in recent years into song writing, that would be wonderful. So far I don't know how to do that, and I'm not pushing the point."



"He was a lady killer . . . reportedly spent as long as 30 hours having sex with six women."

—George Rush, U.S. Journalist.

IN THE Roxy days, Eno's sexual proclivities were the subject of much speculation, but later he seemed to settle for a while with Alex Blair, a New York girlfriend, and a cat called Poo-poo, in an apartment just north of Wall Street. Alex described him as having "social claustrophobia", which he partially confirms. "I enjoy going for solitary walks. In New York I would walk along the piers on the West Side, where there's nobody around. I'm not disturbed by people, but I see enough of them. I need time alone."

When asked if he has a current girlfriend, he considers the question a little longer than I might have expected before saying, "No, not really. I don't have a series of affairs either. I suppose I'm increasingly inclined towards monogamy, but I don't have any of that either." He grins engagingly. "I'm not so thrilled any more by the idea of sleeping with 25 women a month . . . not that I ever did. It's all part of something I want to leave behind."

I begin to have the feeling that I've stumbled into Eno's life, for a couple of brief hours, at a time when he's changing, perhaps allowing his yearning to take him back to the things he learned when he was very young. "I was brought up a Catholic, went to a Catholic school. I remember the sinister, archaic quality I felt there—every action was charged with repercussions in heaven. I lost all respect for it when I was fourteen, but now, I have increasing respect for it. If I was going to be a Christian that would be the one."

"I think I probably am religious, but not in any traditional way. People have a very bleak view of the future today, humans seem to be making a mess of things, which is probably because humans have deluded themselves into thinking that what they do is terribly important in the world. If you suspend that idea and accept that humans are not important, but nature is very strong, then even if everything gets fucked up by acid rain, nature will find a way to create a new ecology. It might well be an ecology without humans. Humanity might die, but the world will go on. I think the idea that we are part of something larger than ourselves is very difficult to comprehend, but it is a religious idea."

"He takes non-musical concepts and applies them to music." —David Byrne of Talking Heads.

WHEREVER he goes, Eno carries a notebook. In the book he scribbles down thoughts, half-formed ideas, quotes from poets that have touched him, and most of all . . . diagrams. At a second's notice, while talking, the notebook will appear in his hand and he will begin flipping pages until he finds the diagram which illustrates his latest line of thought. Today he's pre-occupied by pendulums, and the complex patterns of movement that can be generated by subjecting them to simple forces.

Moving on to another diagram, he explains, "I was walking through a vast orchard in Pulau Lankawi, Malaya, in 1978, thinking about how chaotic the distribution of trees was. There seemed to be no order to them, until I came to a clearing and, when I looked round, I could see that all the trees were laid out in perfectly straight rows from that point, but you couldn't see any system until you reached that point."

"That became a very important idea to me, and I set about making music with that idea in mind. I create a number of musical sounds which are all cyclical, but because the cycles are of varying lengths, the beginnings and endings rarely coincide. On the few occasions where they do coincide, I place a singular, unique, musical event to heighten the effect."

Yet another diagram reminds him of a trip to Ghana in 1980. "I was in Osu, a suburb of Accra, just a few days after John Lennon died. I sat out on the patio at a big circular stone table with a hole in the middle. I put my headphones on, stuck a microphone into the hole and just sat there with the volume up very high, listening to the sounds of cars away in the distance, and someone singing over there, and some drumming from the other direction. After a while, I realised I was listening to it not as environmental sound, but the way I would listen to music."

It is precisely this kind of perception, this awareness of music in all its forms, that has made Eno an invaluable collaborator for David Bowie, Talking Heads, Devo, Ultravox, Robert Fripp and many others but he rarely involves himself in their lives for any length of time as anything other than a musician.

"I have a place near Bowie in New York, but I would never call round to see him, even though I like him as a person. People assume that, because I work with people for a long time, then we must be soul mates, but it isn't so. Most of my friends aren't in the music business at all."

Eno's place in New York is, however, not his home. He does all of his music and video work in Toronto, and spends much of the rest of the time staying with friends around the world, or living in hotels. "That's a sort of unsettled point in my life. I have no place that I can call home. I own my

parents' house, and the New York apartment, and a flat in London where some friends of mine live. I'd like to have a fixed home, but it hasn't worked out that way yet."

"Really, I'm quite normal."

—Brian Eno.

THE UNSETTLED, globe-trotting life has left Eno with a curious not-quite-English and not-quite-American accent, which seems to embarrass him a little. "It's a lazy way of speaking. Dental language, really. You know? Like, when you're at the dentist and he pushes your tongue down with a depressor and all you can say is "Nnnngghh.....nnnnnggghhhh" when he asks if it hurts. Anybody can speak perfectly good American just by sticking your fist in your mouth and continuing to speak."

Eno is not, apparently, fond of Americans as a breed, much preferring Canadians. His new album, *Apollo—Atmospheres And Soundtracks* was recorded in Canada, even though it celebrates an American achievement, the Apollo moonflight programme. "It came about because the film maker Al Reinert had been working on a documentary film about the Apollo missions, and he couldn't find the right music, until he listened to my album *On Land*. He thought it was the kind of thing he needed, so he asked me to compose a score for the film."

Although Eno's albums never top the charts, and seldom achieve sales above about 100,000 worldwide, he makes a more than adequate living from those plus his other activities as a producer and video maker. There's also a constant flow of royalties from film and television programme makers who find his ambient music ideal as atmospheric background for everything from wildlife documentaries to serious drama productions.

More than probably any other musician, Eno leads the life he chooses, making exactly the music he wants with no concession to popular taste or commerciality, travelling the world and stopping where he chooses to spend a few days, weeks or months.

"Most of the things I like to do cost nothing. Last Monday I walked out onto the moors and found a rocky outcrop with a vast panoramic view, miles from anywhere. It was near sunset, and it faced west, so I sat and watched the sun go down, thinking what a deserted spot it was. Probably no one had ever sat there before me, I thought. When I stood up I noticed a huge heart carved in the stone. It must have been done by a stonemason. In the centre of the heart were carved the words, Kitty Lauder, you are my eternal love. The man who did it must have spent days out there doing that. I thought that was beautiful."

PAPARAZZI STOP

NEW SINGLE STOP

OUT NOW STOP

ON 7" STOP

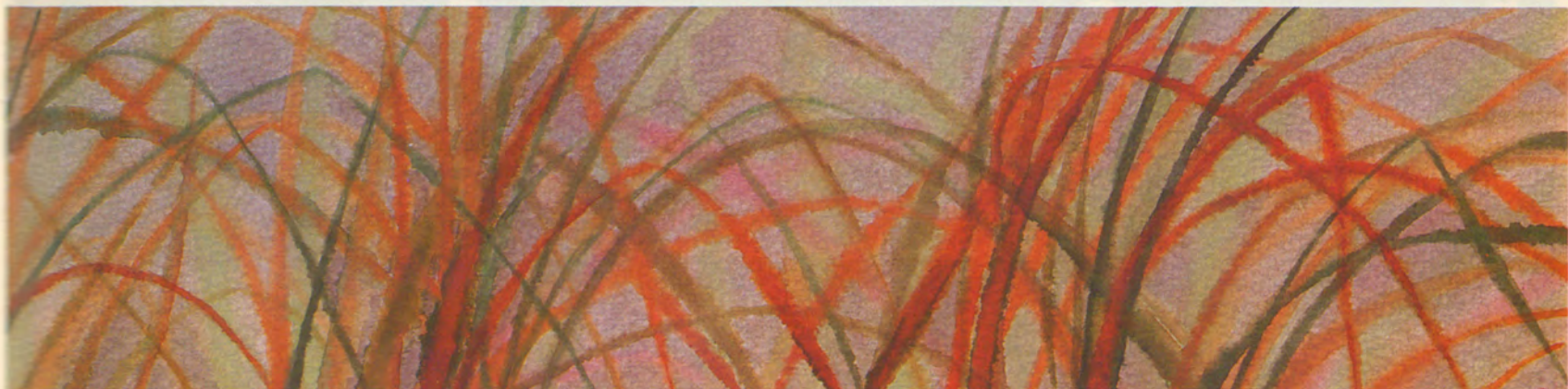
AND 12" STOP

MCA RECORDS

CHINA CRISIS

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Possible Pop Songs Volume Two



Album, V2286 Cassette TCV2286. Contains the Single.

Virgin Records Ltd



Wilde Style

■ "YOU KNOW how people see me? As the sugar frosting against a background that goes on behind me; it's all sort of coated with Kim." There aren't many girls that have to explain away their good looks as often as Kim Wilde. She's been dubbed 'The Bardot Of Pop', and compared to everyone from Marilyn Monroe to Deborah Harry, and her patience is wearing thin.

Now it's time to diversify, and perhaps try her hand at writing her own songs; "— but I don't want to approach it as a credibility vendetta. I mean, who knows, it might come out sounding like Jack and Jill. I might be hopeless, but I think that it's time to set a few things straight. I suppose so far I've had such strong songwriters behind me that I've become lazy."

The fact that those songwriters happen to be father Marty and brother Ricky, and that Kim's mum runs the fan club and cuts the back of Kim's hair, and that Kim loves them all very much and still lives at home at twenty-two seems to have done a great deal to weaken her impact as a pop star, and she is for many people just the public face of a family that it is tempting to regard as the British Osmonds.

"I don't decry The Osmond way of life. I think a lot of people decry family life, whereas I think that it's a very valuable thing. I mean people have said to me, 'Don't talk about your parents too much Kim, it doesn't look good. We know you love your mum and dad and brother, but try to talk about sex and drugs and rock and roll: it's more like your image!'"

"But I've spent three years being really honest about them, about their role in my career and my personal life. It really bugs me that people are so snobbish about things like that. It's a ridiculous attitude. It's a wonder that they haven't booted me out of the country. It's almost an offence here, it's almost like you'll get taken to court. Maybe it has done some damage at a certain level. People don't find me so enticing and mysterious perhaps. I mean

you wouldn't see Lou Reed sit here and talk about his mum and dad, and you probably wouldn't see Siouxsie sitting here and talking about her mum and dad either but she probably adores them and they probably adore her."

Blondes are supposed to have more fun, but as we sit and discuss the things that Kim has had to overcome, it doesn't seem to have the ring of truth about it. There's always the problem of her looks. "Every time I do an interview all I get asked is about my father and how I have my hair done, and what kind of clothes I wear. I suppose that's because they're writing for kids' magazines and that's what the kids want to hear about. But they never ask me questions about how I go into the studio and produce a particular sound. They don't want to know if I use synthesisers or drum machines or if there's a digital mix..."

So does Kim ever get fed up with her looks and feel that she's a prisoner of her image? Judging from the slightly tongue-in-cheek cover of her last single, *Love Blonde*, and her choice of the song, the answer would seem to be yes. Wouldn't it be nicer to be a brunette with spots?

"I suppose that I was lucky because I never had to change my image drastically to suit that of a pop star. I've always worn the same kind of things, since before I started singing. Nobody has ever come out really bluntly and said that I should exploit my looks. I suppose that I consciously set out to look as good as possible by wearing make-up and nice clothes, but I think that every girl does that. Perhaps I've changed myself gradually. But I've never allowed myself to be forced into anything that feels uncomfortable, even though it was suggested to me on a few occasions. I just politely refused. I'm not a prisoner at all, I'm just being myself, that's all."

□ ANTON RUSH



Fiat Lux

■ SEBASTIAN Barbaro had ambitions to be an enduring actor. He was up for his equity card having just finished a stint in *The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari* in a small corner of Yorkshire.

Bill Nelson had written the play's music, and Barbaro saw this as a prime opportunity to play the old hand his latest songs. Nelson was suitably impressed, and told him to go away and make a decent demo.

Not far away, David P. Crickmore was dabbling in the studio he'd had built in his cellar, and it wasn't long before his old acquaintance Barbaro approached him with news of Nelson's interest.

In due course, the tape was sent to Nelson who signed them for one single, *Feels Like Winter Again*, on his Cocteau label. The song caused quite a stir in the independent charts, and the major record companies started to fall in line. Crickmore takes up the story.

"Things really took off when we landed the major support slot with *Blancmange*. Neil Arthur, their vocalist, heard the single and offered us the tour straight away."

Polydor duly signed the group, and it

was in the record company's offices that they met producer Hugh Jones. Impressed with Jones' efforts for *Clock DVA* and *Echo And The Bunnymen*, the embryonic Fiat Lux asked him to pull their disparate ideas together.

It's a partnership that the group revel in. Jones allows them the space to experiment, then hones down the sound to marketable proportions. Barbaro was quick to interject.

"But we're not calculating. We experiment a lot hoping to attract a diverse audience. That's why we want to stay in Wakefield, where we feel more creative and less prone to chase hollow fads."

So there we have it. A successful independent single, and a more recent, less distinctive one called *Photography* on a major. Barbaro and Crickmore, along with saxophonist Ian Nelson and drummer Rick Martinez seemed happy as your more caring, more feeling electronic popsters Fiat Lux. When one laughed, they all laughed, and my face hurt from where I tried to laugh with them.

□ SIMON POTTER

Real Buddha



Ronny plans her comeback

■ WHEN the Dietrichesque French model-turned-vocalist Ronny teamed up with the *Strange and Egan* set a couple of years ago, she thought that she was about to enjoy a glittering career as one of the dominant faces on the then oh-so-stylish pop scene. Unfortunately for Ronny, this was not to be. A shaky deal with Polydor, coupled with a string of domestic and emotional upsets, drove Ronny into deep depression. A friend suggested she chant 'Nam myoho renge kyo' — a Buddhist meditational prayer — and lo and behold, Ronny's problems began to disappear. She is now about to make a comeback, this time leaning on Buddha, rather than Rusty Egan, for guidance.

So apart from chanting 'Nam myoho renge kyo', what has Ronny been up to? "When the split with Polydor happened I tried desperately hard to get another deal, but all the doors seemed to be closed, nobody was interested. Buddhism has completely changed my life. It is such a logical religion. I am writing some very deep and emotional love songs at the moment, and that is something that just was not in me before."

Over the last two or three months Ronny has put together a new four-piece band, for which Warren Cann of Ultravox plays drums, and at a recent gig at the Heds club in London the band went down like the *Second Coming*. The record companies were quick to pay homage, which resulted in some studio time with Chrysalis, for whom she's recording some new material, co-written with John Vangelis, he of the *Bladerunner* and *Chariots of Fire* soundtracks.

Things are certainly looking up for Ronny: her new band is ready to rehearse, master of haute-couture Anthony Price is designing her costumes, and a trip to Japan is planned for work on a TV commercial and some live dates with Ryuichi Sakamoto.

How did that chant go again?

□ GLENN JACKSON

BLITZ



Tongue Tied

■ **PICTURE** this. A smoky night at the Beet Bop Club in downtown Camden during those early months of '82. Free jazz is between this month's covers, just watch those beatniks go. On stage Swallow Tongue blow freer than most.

Cut to the present and a West London office where Sam Appleby, sax and guitar man for the threesome was in memory-jerking mood.

"Yeah, it was very much the heady days of the new jazz, when loads of people were going round wearing berets and goatee beards. They sort of adopted us."

"But then we started wanting to write songs which incorporated the free stuff," continued Lavinia Greenlaw, the vocalising third of the combo.

"It had got to the stage where the audience came up to us saying, 'Yeah, it's really interesting, but we're not sure what we should be doing to it,'" adds bass-player, Alistair Roberts.

All three try to play down the fact that they met at Kingston Polytechnic, but I'm not one to keep secrets. Anyway, Alistair got tired of his electronic doodlings and teamed up with Lavinia to create an electronic/jazz hybrid. As Alistair said, "Free jazz? It was so free it was ridiculous"

But their initial flirtation with the 'new jazz' didn't last too long. The trio had to climb out of their Serge Clerc cartoon, as Virginia stressed, "We used that period of jazz as a vehicle to get gigs. Then we rejected it because we

didn't want to be pushed into that cafe society bit. After all, we're not beatniks!"

So how hard has it been to develop an image since the divorce from the Beet Bop Club?

Alistair takes up the point, "We're not sure what our image is. We're very critical of a lot of the stuff we try out, and so we develop an image through rejecting most of that. The residue is our image."

Sam looks thoughtful. "You see our influences are still jazz-based, but jazz is such a huge music, that the term itself has almost become redundant. Jazz isn't really a music, it's a way of playing music, and so we tend to draw on almost everything we hear, really."

Their first single, a cover version of Michael Jackson's Got To Be There has heralded a new direction for their pioneering label Cherry Red. At one time purveyors of all that was experimental, the label has inched towards more solid ground with this jazzed-up dancefloor contender—I mean you can dance to it, and the new LP A Stain Upon The Silence promises more of the same.

One thing still worries them, though, as Alistair points out, "I do wish someone would come up with a better description of what we do. 'Jazz' is kinda misleading. Will 'jazz-pop' do?"

The ensuing silence said it all.

□ SIMON POTTER

PSYCHIC TV



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PERMANENTLY ON CASSETTE

some
bizzare



The Weather Girls – two of America's biggest musical exports

Tons of Fun

■ **BIGGER** than a Big Mac and hotter than Mad Av hype, here are Izora Armstead and Martha Wash, also known as the **WEATHER GIRLS**. Weighing in at well over 500lbs, they used to call themselves *Two Tons of Fun*, and are two of America's largest musical exports to Japan, where they've just finished a sellout tour.

One-time Gospel singers, they exploded onto the pop scene as back-up singers with Sylvester (which has given them a fervent gay following). Next they released their own *Two Tons of Fun* album, which went gold, and followed up that success with the now legendary 12", *It's Raining Men*!

The song wasn't particularly special but it was accompanied by what has to be one of the best American videos to date. Glistening men, naked except for their red underpants, really do rain down from the sky, and buzz round the two girls like bees round a Queen. And those girls just love it! Screaming ALLELUIAH, dancing like crazy in their raincoats, or reclining in cream negligees on a heart shaped bed swarming with guys (this bit even had to be censored!) the girls really look like they're having the best time ever!

After seeing the video I could hardly believe it when I was told that Izora was pushing 40 with 7 kids to her credit! She raised them by working as a cabdriver and bartender while waiting for her break. Meanwhile Martha, who says she's 27, majored in business and then worked as a bank teller in San Francisco where they both live. In fact they're only six blocks from each other which is great for them because they're "real close" and have been for 25 years.

This month sees the release of a new album, *Success*, produced by Paul Jabara of Diana Ross fame. All in all, the outlook for the Weather Girls is looking decidedly sunny.

□ ALICE HILLER

Kurtain Call

■ **THAT HEADLINE** bears absolutely no significance as regards my recent meeting with maniacal rockers King Kurt, but it does follow in the theme of awful punning that such occasions seem to demand. More suitable might have been "Kurt Reply". Research had persuaded me to take along a change of clothing and check that my life insurance policy was still valid, so the band's initial reluctance to even chat, let alone take my trousers off, came as something of a surprise.

All six members hail from South London and hold a distinctly uncharitable view of the other side of the river, where, says guitarist John, "they automatically double the prices and walk around looking really miserable". By the same token, their newly-acquired patrons at Stiff Records "were all North London depressives until we came along. We make them look handsome". King Kurt are extremely proud of being the ugliest band around, and it's not a claim easily disputed: large tufts of hair have gone missing from their variously coloured heads and the vision of a pack of mange-ridden cats came to mind, until it was pointed out the Kurts reject the whole notion of a cat-dominated rock scene. Says Rory: "When we were starting, everything was the Stray Cats, Polecats, Cool Cats... and so we wanted something totally different". Upon asking which particular animal the Kurts had taken as a mascot, a 12-inch albino rat was dropped unceremoniously into my vulnerable lap.

So far King Kurt's reputation is for a wantonly decadent and unruly live show, with everything from real blood and dead animals to beer and mushy peas being launched from stage to audience and back again. "This came

from our days of going out and getting pissed and crashing parties," explains John, "We'd raid the fridge and if we didn't fancy eating something, it would end up over people's heads." But didn't they think that this might detract from the music, and therefore the record sales? John again: "People are going to have a really pleasant surprise, because they come for the live fun, and when they find out it's brilliant music as well they'll be chuffed."

Anarchic vocalist Smeggy, in a supermarket trolley all this time, had been sitting tending to his acne. A passing mention of our PM yielded only a declaration of her impressive mammary endowment – "nipples like babies' thumbs, I'll bet". When a forthcoming student gig is discussed, Smeggy becomes even more vitriolic: "All they do is fucking cry, they've never left school, they're just a bunch of reds – and you can print that. I don't like 'em at all."

Smeggy was presumably conserving energy for the next live debacle. On stage he is frantic, inexhaustible, with arms pumping like delirious Space Invaders and some excessively camp posturing interchanged with elaborate masturbatory gestures. He is prone to leering exhibitionism although the Lyceum gig several days before had been a little more decorous due to management pressure. The music flaunts an uncompromising post-punk energy – a buzz-saw sound with a tribal undercurrent and a preoccupation with rats and Zulus.

Their first single on Stiff, *Destination Zulu Land* was like some manic Country & Western footstomper, and the debut album is scheduled for release this month.

□ MARK BRENNAN



Kurt and Rory



Not a Jam Role

■ IN THE cut-throat business of making records it's always difficult to enter your stakes, even if your name is Bruce Foxton and you are a former member of one of the most obsessively loved and admired bands ever.

When Paul Weller disbanded The Jam, Foxton went through a soul-destroying period not unlike that of Bracht's soldier who returns home from a victorious war and is required to become a beggar in order to re-establish his life. After the farewell Jam tour — "a really depressing time for me" — and despite his reputation as a kind of Dr Watson to Weller's Sherlock Holmes, Foxton found himself having to knock out a cut-price demo in order to secure a new record deal just like any aspiring newcomer. What he's now faced with is the treadmill of marketing, the projection of his own image, and the vulnerability is evident.

"I would like to say that I don't treat music as a sideline," he says when I keep asking him about the seriousness of his new solo career — is it important to him, or is he just going through the motions? "It is totally, really, important to me. I really enjoy it. I would like to write better lyrics. At this moment I'm interested in stories and films, lyrics with a beginning and an end. Also things that I read about in the paper, just what goes on around me... something I feel strongly about. I'm pleased about the way the songs are progressing, but I still have a long way to go, and I don't need to be told it; I know that, I am aware of it."

His speech is full of enthusiasm, searching and questioning, and broken by his generous chuckle. He's keen to talk, defining — for himself as much as for me — the way in which he's approaching his solo role.

"Before, Paul was doing all that — looking after the songs — and I had to think about the bass parts to play. Now I need another frame of mind. I've got to really get into the song, remember things. It's mainly melodies that I like to think I'm

good at, that's what I start off with. Actually my girlfriend has helped me with a few songs that were on my demo and might surface on the album, which should be out at the end of October."

He pauses long and hard and various degrees of concentration waver over his angular face. "You've got to get an understanding," he says finally, "of what you are trying to say, of a subject, to sing with belief for people, you know. I think it might be a cop-out to get someone to help me with the lyrics. I must allocate time each day."

"The only thing I would be careful about is making a political statement. I mean, I feel so strongly about it. Probably not as strongly as Paul. But it's a subject I really like to keep my ideas on, what I think of Thatcher or whoever outside of music. Obviously with three million unemployed you can't ignore it, the subject is very important, very important."

Did Weller influence the way he thought?

"No. But the Jam did change the way people think...at the time. I don't know about mass numbers, but one or two people lead radically new life styles. A lot of them did think more. The subject will not be in my music as it was in The Jam's, but it spurred a reaction, which is important for music. I want to make them aware and see the other side of the coin though. Maybe if Bruce Foxton feels strongly enough about something he will speak out."

Thus far Bruce's music has been eccentric, an expression of dilettantism, but his renewed freedom and vigour suggest his explorations might produce some real corks. The fact that people expect little from him adds an impetus and takes away pressure. Let's wait and see. Meanwhile there is Paolo Hewitt's Jam book to drive your eyeballs wild and a compilation of Jam hits plus nine new songs released under the title of *Snap*.

□ NEIL ROWLAND

Will Powers

■ THE ANALYST'S couch was groaning under the weight of Lynn Goldsmith, her deep-voiced alter-ego Will Powers, and me. Today's therapy lesson was to discuss Will's latest LP *Dancing For Mental Health*.

A compendium of mind games, the album promotes Powers (Lynn's voice deepened by a modulator) as the guru most likely to. It's a testament to full potential, advising you to unlock the chains of your heart to reach the pinnacle of inner and outer happiness. I wondered if the sentiments expressed on the record by Will Powers were a major part of Lynn Goldsmith.

"Well, Will Powers is a person and a state of mind, and yeah he's about me. I didn't create that voice as a disguise, but as another instrument."

"Will Powers is based on the idea that life is yours, it's totally up to you. If you're in trouble and want help, go out and get it. You either need a sense of humour to deal with your worries or the strength to know you're not alone in feeling that way."

Lynn Goldsmith has the sort of Harvard Business School cool that only comes with success. Back in the mid-70s, she'd already established herself at 24 as the US's youngest-ever female TV director, and since then as a celebrated photographer of heavyweights like The Police and Bruce Springsteen.

Away from work, she's spent time as a record producer and rock'n'roll svengali. Leaving aside Will Powers for a moment, what's Lynn Goldsmith like away from her work (over)load?

"There's no distinction between work and play with Lynn Goldsmith. My life is a consolidated whole. Therefore, I might be difficult to get on with personally or in a work environment, because I can't relate with an individual to accomplish my goal."

But to relate to people personally or

professionally you have to put on certain fronts. You can't behave in the same way in two such different environments. I put it to her that we're all guilty of playing up certain sides of our characters under different conditions.

"Well, if you're looking for the juicy stuff....When I find myself becoming emotionally involved with a man, it causes me to become incredibly insecure. I feel like I'm losing something."

"Say you have a man who's a good friend, and everything's terrific. Suddenly you sleep with him, and then you've shown a need you can't fulfil on your own. You know, he has 'that thing' and you don't."

The *Dancing For Mental Health* LP was a labour of love, not least because Lynn as producer enlisted the help of musicians she most admired — people like Sting, Nile Rodgers and Tom Bailey.

Then there are the accompanying videos she's painstakingly filmed incorporating the very latest in computer graphics and special effects. The clip for the track *Adventures In Success* took four months to film alone.

The shrink session was nearly over. Lynn left the couch with this parting shot.

"Look, all the boys say (moaning). 'You're too analytical.' See I can't judge if that's healthy or not. I only know I'm working hard to try and explain more about life to myself. We're faced with a dilemma. You can't take your problems too seriously, yet you can't trivialise them either, or you'll never get them in perspective. You'll never go a step further in your own life."

With that, she nudged Will, and the pair of them went off, leaving me alone in the cold of the consulting room.

□ SIMON POTTER



Lynn Goldsmith



Boy Jones

■ "I THINK it would be fine for society to get more wild and promiscuous, then we could get sex and a lot of other important things in perspective....Any form of restriction leads to perversion. That may sound anarchic, but the only kind of revolution I'm into is a personal one. A change inside people will lead to a change outside."

My conversation with keyboard contender Howard Jones had moved a long way from our opening exchanges about his sing-a-long stage act. War and peace and sex and guilt seemed to make for a natural discourse, but first his rise to chart single status.

Music had been in the Jones family for years. Howard was sprung from a tightly knit Welsh community – the sort where your parents sang you to sleep, where you took piano lessons between church outings, where your Grandad sang way beyond closing time at the pub.

It seemed inevitable that the Jones boy would develop his interest in music, and as he got older his chief inspiration came from the endless outpourings of the mid-70s supergroups like Genesis and Emerson, Lake and Palmer.

"Yeah, Keith Emerson was the only keyboard player for me. The reason I went to music college was because I knew Emerson was classically orientated, and I had to emulate him, which I know now

was a load of crap."

Frustrated by the strictures and worm's eye view of his Manchester music college, a disillusioned Howard Jones gave up. He went to work on the shop floor of a 'Clingfilm' factory, and soon realised music was a better bet.

Howard has spent a lot of time gathering his thoughts over the years, and his world view goes deeper than your average exchange of half-baked ideas down the pub. But where does the music fit in?

"Well I don't expect to change things suddenly, if at all. I just hope that my music will prod people in a certain direction, and encourage them to pursue their goals with all they've got. That's what the *New Song* single was all about."

'Total Fulfilment' is engraved on Jones' heart, and he believes that it can only be reached through mutual cooperation, by destroying the myth that every man is an island. It's a theme that's underlined by the unbounded joy of his stage performance, but it's obvious that deep down the boy is worried.

"If you look at the world, it's a hideous affair, so you've just got to manufacture a healthy optimism that sees progress. I'm not too concerned whether that's accurate or not. It's a device for making my life more bearable."

□ SIMON POTTER.

Taking the Cure

■ I SUPPOSE that some of the great mysteries of the world will remain unsolved forever. But just why The Cure have released three decidedly lightweight singles this year is certainly no Marie Celeste.

"These songs are only different from some of our other songs in the fact that they have been released," explains Robert Smith. "We've done some things like that before but they were never put to vinyl because I thought they would clash with other work we were trying to do. It would have weakened the effect."

But why do this kind of material at all? "It's fun and much lighter than our other material. Mainly because it's drawn from more common experience than the usual stuff. I know that we have a lot of fun recording it, but there's no intensity. But I do know that we won't do any more light material like that because I haven't written any more and I don't feel like writing any more."

Robert can't have had a lot of time to do any writing at all. His close involvement with the Banshees, Glove and Cure have all but swallowed his time up.

"It's all made me very tired," he says. "The Glove thing was different because we knew all along that it was going to be a one-off. It was just really a great potfull of ideas that had to be used. They had been floating around for months."

Have the Banshees been satisfied with all his hard work? "Well, you'd have to ask them what sort of role I play. They're still letting me play with them, though, so I presume that they are happy. If they weren't I'm sure that they wouldn't let me play. It's all up to them in the end, not me."

Robert staunchly defends the Banshees against any criticism over their covering of the Beatles' *Dear*

Prudence a couple of months ago.

"Some people have probably been disillusioned by the Banshees for different reasons. Stupid reasons. People think that because the Banshees did *Dear Prudence* that it was a concession. But that's stupid. Severin was listening to it long before he ever played in the 100 Club. For him it's nothing odd."

"We tried to Banshee up the song but it was good as it was. At first it was never planned as a single, it was just the result of messing about in the studio. But we tape everything we do and we thought it sounded really good and so it was just built up from there."

"But the Banshees have always meant different things to different people anyway. They never set out to achieve anything apart from being independent, the same as what I've always aimed for with The Cure. At the same time I know that a lot of people have been affected by us, the same way as they've been affected by the Banshees."

Robert Smith remains the most enigmatic of all his clique. Whether it's just because of his slightly distant air I do not know. Maybe it's his insistence on not leading too real a life.

"I never think about what I'm going to be doing in about 5 years time," he murmurs. "I always just worry about the year I'm in. As long as I'm roughly sure of what's happening I'm okay."

"This year I can't wait to do The Cure album, which will happen around December. I'm going to go away soon with all the demos I've done this year, all my bits – my bag of bits, and see if there's a record from them. The title for it at the moment is *The Top*."

Knowing Robert, it'll be a spinning top.

□ PAUL PRAYAG

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The Peech Boys hang out



Taking the cure: Robert Smith and Lol Tolhurst

Just Peechy

■ **MICHAEL** de Benedictus has one of those American voices that sounds almost too relaxed. The co-producer and team member of New York City's Peech Boys seems pleased with the success of his multifarious activities at N.Y.'s Paradise Garage club, where the city's young go to dance, and dance, and dance... often for 14 hours at a time. But self-conceit doesn't come into it; Michael's too worried about other things going on round him.

"The Russians shootin' down that Korean Airlines jet, wasn't it terrible? What can you do about it? We feel a duty to make our music a voice to the world, to show there is importance to life. And kids are receptive - we want to be an example to young people."

Born in upstate New York, de Benedictus spent much of his childhood playing organ in his local church. But as he moved through his teens and a job in a music store, the bright lights of Manhattan sucked him in, and there... "by the grace of God I met Larry."

Larry Levan had built a rock solid reputation as one of New York's demon record mixers. He became the most sought after boy about town after his masterly mixes of Taana Gardner's Heartbeat and Gwen Guthrie's It Should Have Been You. The cognoscenti clamoured, including, it is rumoured, the semi-legendary Arthur Baker. Apparently, he spent one night at The Garage watching Levan's every move.

The relationship between music and dance is all important to Levan and de Benedictus. At The Garage, de Benedictus plays synth to Levan's spinning discs, and together they improvise with the latest in studio technology.

Studio wizardry aside, the Peech Boys have caused a bit of a stir with their acapella (voices only, to those who thought it was an ice cream flavour) B-sides. This trend started when someone brought the wrong tapes to a session. Everyone was so knocked out by these vocals-only tracks, that they were released unaltered.

So the Peech Boys have established themselves at the forefront of New York's dance renaissance, and have been turning a lot of heads in the process. The release of their first Island LP Life Is Something Special couldn't have come at a better time.

"Yes, we're delighted with the response we've had in the US, but we're disappointed we haven't hit the charts yet in Britain. Having been over, though, we've got a clearer understanding of the kind of music people want to hear.

"We're hopeful that everywhere our music will affect people emotionally, will motivate the positive sides of their character. It's an artistic continuum, and we've got to keep developing it."

□ SIMON POTTER

LETTERS

✦ THE PAGE THAT LETS YOU BITE BACK.

✦ Send to: BLITZ MAGAZINE (Letters), 1 Lower James St., London W1.

“ ”

THANK you for the WHAM interview in the October issue of BLITZ. It was so refreshing to see them shown up in their true light and not have some star-struck journalist drivelling over their image-conscious music. Well done Paul Morley once again for knocking in some sense, and well done BLITZ for having the guts to print the TRUTH.

Simon Egerton,
Newcastle.

I AM writing about the WHAM article in the October issue of BLITZ. Is this meant to be funny or simply provocative? Or is it some inadvertently taped conversation that happened to fall into your lap? All I can say is that Geroge and Andrew seem pathetic twats and Paul Morley is too self consciously intellectual for his own good. Your photographer could have saved himself some celluloid. And in any case, who CARES?

Tom Andrews,
London SE1.

WHAT AN extremely stupid interview with Wham in your October issue. I don't understand a magazine whose policy is to ask somebody extraordinarily prejudiced against a pair of singers to then interview them. There is no enjoyment in reading the record of a slanging match. Those two boys have made a success and their music is very pleasant. It is quite unnecessary to attack them because they are not 'meaningful' or making any devastating social comment and because they look reasonably attractive and wholesome. I find them quite refreshing in the midst of spotty, dirty, badly dressed, inarticulate oiks whose only social comment to me seems to advocate the virtues of soap and water!

Let us have less smarty-pants nit-picking and something we would be interested to read instead of the disagreeable comments of a bad tempered interviewer.

Fiona Stow,
London SW11.

IS THE Mekon for sale? (BLITZ no:14) I think I've fallen in love with it! Good magazine by the way.

Christina,
Oxford.

■ Sorry, the Mekon is not for sale (*This Year's Models*, BLITZ no: 14) and unfortunately is the property of the company that commissioned it. Rumour has it he's put on a bit of weight since he was photographed for BLITZ...

I JUST wanted to say I think your fashion pages are really excellent and it's really good that you show stuff by young designers. I'm a designer (22) and have just left college and it's people like me that need all the publicity they can get, especially outside of London. Also I think the photography is really great. Sorry this sounds so wet, but I really do like your magazine.

Sarah Nedway,
Manchester.

I HAVE just bought issue 15 of BLITZ and it looks as if you've finally found your feet at last. The interviews with Gary Crowley and WHAM! are especially interesting and this is the sort of thing you should stick to, ie: young people with talent and new ideas (subjective as it may be).

As there's so much competition for magazines aimed at young people, it seems that BLITZ needs an identifiable niche - if you cut out the interviews with the likes of Peter Blake and keep to people under 25, you may be nearer to finding one.

Anyway, keep it up, and get Simon Garfield and Paul Morley to write more for you.

Caroline Davies,
London EC3.

I AM A seventeen-year old student who is crazy about your magazine. I first spotted BLITZ while on vacation in England this summer. I think it's one of the best magazines that I've ever gotten my hands on.

Blitzed in Canada,
Michael Smith,
Ontario,
Canada.

IS STEVE Strange never satisfied? (BLITZ no:15) What's all this about a Creative Workforce? I'm surprised he has time with all his socialising and worrying about his truly wonderful figure (It is, truly!) Also, has he just had a nose job, or is he getting embarrassed about showing his ageing face?

Stan Adler,
Clapham.

CONGRATULATIONS on an excellent magazine, I'm only on my third issue and I'm enjoying the inspiration and information I get via BLITZ. More fashion and designer information please! And how about a Pete Murphy interview - especially with his new dance thing. An amazing guy!!

Sarah J. MacDonald,
Isle of Skye.

I SAW in BLITZ your article on Edward Bell by Anton Rush. I would like to know where I can buy his posters (especially Marilyn Moderne) and how much they cost. I would be grateful if you could tell me.

Fiona MacFarlane,
Cambridge.

■ Yes, Edward Bell posters are available for sale by contacting the artist himself at 284 Earls Court Road, London SW5. There are four posters in all: a signed limited edition from his first exhibition *Larger Than Life*, priced £25; a poster from the film *Edward* about the artist, unsigned and priced £10; a poster from his latest exhibition at London's 3-D Gallery, Wapping, signed £20, unsigned £10. There is a further limited edition print available entitled *De Milo Moderne*, priced £20. None of the pictures reproduced in BLITZ no: 14 have been made into posters.

A whisper went around: an electric rumour that
burned along the underground circuit. He was coming back.
I could not

**CANADIAN CLUB.
THE UNCOMMON SPIRIT.**

